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AGAM-P (M) (27 Aug 68)

FOR OT-RD-682059

6 September 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Reports Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 3rd  
Squadron 17th Cavalry

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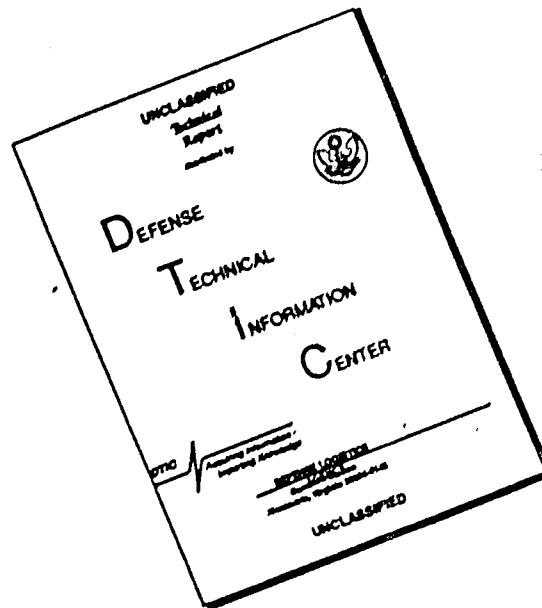
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3RD SQUADRON 17TH CAVALRY



1 FEBRUARY 1968 THRU 30 APRIL 1968

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HEADQUARTERS  
3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry  
APO 96216

AVGC-BC

1 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report of 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry for Period Ending  
30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR - 65 (R1)

See Distribution:

## A. Section II, Operations: Significant Activities

a. The squadron's objectives and missions during this quarter were to locate VC/NVA forces, enemy logistical bases, and interdict enemy lines of communication leading from Cambodia. The squadron, with troops OPCON to several units during this period, achieved wide coverage of a large section of III Corps Tactical Zone and part of IV Corps Tactical Zone. The area included: Tay Ninh and Phuoc Long Provinces to the north, Cambodian Border to the west, Kien Tuong Province to the south, and Xuan Loc Province to the east.

(1) During the month of February, Squadron was involved in conducting detailed reconnaissance around the strategic locations of Tan Son Nhut Air Base and the Dien Hoa-Long Binh complex. An additional mission assigned during this period was that of counter-rocket surveillance. The squadron provided a concentrated around-the-clock effort to discover and destroy rocket launching sites in the vicinity of these two key areas. Many sites were located and destroyed, rocket caches were located, and two sites were engaged and destroyed while the enemy was physically launching rockets.

(2) A technique involving cooperation between aero scouts and Air Force Forward Air Controllers was devised and employed. The aero scouts, after requesting an air strike, would place a smoke grenade on top of the target. This would give the FAC the exact location of the target enabling the FAC to direct more accurate strikes with the fighter-bombers. After the strike, the aero scouts would make a low level bomb damage assessment, relaying the information to the FAC. This cooperative effort usually achieved much greater target coverage with a more efficient use of tactical air assets.

(3) Operations during the month of March were conducted away from the key target areas of the TLT Offensive, along the routes of withdrawal of the enemy forces and their new locations. Reconnaissance operations revealed withdrawal routes leading away from the Saigon area, northwest past Cu Chi, and into the Ho Bo - Bo Loi - Trapezoid areas.

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CONFIDENTIAL

6

AVCS-BC

1 May 1968

SUBJECT: Open Block Report of 1st Squadron, 17th Cavalry for Period Ending  
30 April 1968, ROS 68-17 - 65 (R1)

(4) During the month of April, the squadron moved its efforts northward, identifying and interdicting enemy lines of communications from Cambodia into the Song Be - Dau Tieng areas. Routes of resupply were discovered with evidence that supplies were being moved by motor vehicles as well as by foot, oxcarts and sampans. Trucks were located and destroyed in enemy storage areas. This mission has proven very effective and in interdicting known lines of communication and is expected to contribute materially to the overall objectives in these areas.

Specific Operations. The 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry participated in ten operations during the reporting period. These operations were conducted in conjunction with the 25th Infantry Division, 1st Infantry Division, 9th Infantry Division, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, 199th Light Infantry Brigade, and 101st Airborne Division.

(1) During the TET Offensive, 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry (-) was released from Operation Yellowstone and provided a concentrated effort to find and fix enemy forces in the areas of Saigon and Cu Chi. B Troop operated in the Saigon - Duc Hoa - Bau Trai areas with C Troop concentrating in the Iron Triangle - Ho Bo - Trapezoid - Cu Chi areas. A Troop remained OPCON to 199th Light Infantry Brigade. D Troop was OPCON to 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry (Mechanized) operating along the 25th Infantry Division MSR. On 1 February, B Troop, operating to the north and west of Saigon, spotted an active base camp at XT779071. Approximately one company of enemy troops, with weapons, was sighted in the base camp and surrounding woodland. B Troop immediately took the VC under fire with aero weapons elements while requesting an airstrike and artillery. The target area was engaged for over an hour resulting in 73 VC KBA (BC) and 1 US KIA. C Troop sighted small groups of enemy troops several times during the day: groups of 5 or 6 VC at XT668262, XT629326, XT670304, and XT626250, plus several smaller groups at other locations. All groups were engaged with automatic weapons and rockets resulting in 16 KBA (BC) and 18 KBA (Possible). On 2 February, B Troop reported 10 VC hiding in the woods at XT779085. The enemy was engaged with organic weapons resulting in 9 KBA (BC). B Troop later reported approximately 40 VC hiding in a trench at XT628214. Eight VC were confirmed killed as B Troop engaged the site with an aero weapons team. 4th Battalion, 23d Infantry was then ordered by 25th Infantry Division to sweep the area of B Troop's contact but made no further contact. C Troop again engaged several small groups of VC troops vicinity XT5660, XT6834, and XT5637 killing 9 VC KBA (BC) with 3 possible KBA. Late in the afternoon, C Troop was ordered to the vicinity of Cu Chi in support of the Second Brigade. Elements of the brigade had been in heavy contact all morning. C Troop, upon arrival, immediately placed extremely accurate aero weapons fire on the enemy and were credited with 36 KBA (BC) by the brigade. On 4 February, B Troop killed 3 VC (BC) trying to run into a tree line after being spotted at XT751148. B Troop then engaged an automatic weapons position resulting in 5 KBA (BC) at XT804126. C Troop spotted 2 VC carrying AK-47 rifles and engaged with 2 VC KBA (BC). The combined efforts of both troops also destroyed 22 sampans during the day. On

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AVGC-BC

1 May 1968

Subject: 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry for Period Ending  
30 April 1968, RGS CEFAR - 65 (R1)

6 February, B Troop was supporting 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry, which was in heavy contact at XT775045. The aero weapons platoon placed accurate automatic weapons and rocket fire into the enemy positions for over five hours. The 3/4 Cavalry credited B Troop with 18 structures destroyed, 10 KBA (BC), and 20 KBA (Possible). On 9 February, D Troop was placed OPCON to 4th Battalion, 23d Infantry and continued its mission of securing the RER. On 11 February, B Troop reported 7 VC with weapons vicinity XT77504. All seven were engaged resulting in 7 VC KBA (BC). Twenty-five (25) enemy troops were then spotted along the Hoc Mon Canal at XT775067 and taken under fire. B Troop was credited with 6 VC KBA (BC) and 10 VC KBA (Possible) in this engagement. C Troop was flying a last light recon along the Saigon River on 13 February and spotted 35 VC at XT674233. The enemy troops were brought under fire and an artillery mission was called on the target area. Results of the artillery strike was 28 VC KIA (possible). On 14 February, B Troop sighted 20 VC at XT775085. Artillery and airstrikes were called on the area revealing a larger enemy force than was initially indicated. Artillery and air killed 40 VC (BC) with 26 bunkers destroyed while B Troop was credited with 8 KBA (BC) and 7 KBA (Possible). Two secondary explosions were also observed. On 15 February, B Troop again reported enemy troops in the same area. Artillery and airstrikes were again put on the target and at 1435 hours the aero rifle platoon was inserted at XT775085. The platoon swept through the area capturing: 3 PCW, 3 AK-50, 9 AK-47, 6 RPG-2 Launchers, 3 RPG-7 Launchers, 2 - 60mm Mortars, 2 Radios, 3 - .45 Cal Pistols, 2 - .50 Cal Machine Guns, 1 - 12.7 Machine Gun, 1 Chicom LMG, 70 RPG Rounds, 8000 AK47 Rounds, 50 - 60mm Mortar Rounds, 60 Hand Grenades, 25 lbs of Documents, 10 lbs of C4, 10 sets of Web Gear and was credited with 22 VC KIA (BC) with no US casualties. C Troop engaged several small groups of VC, vicinity XT6237, obtaining a total of 17 VC KBA (BC). On 17 February, D Troop was released from the 4th Battalion, 23d Infantry.

(2) This operation was extremely successful inflicting heavy losses on the enemy with a minimum loss of US personnel and equipment. Total enemy losses for the period were:

<u>KIA (BC)</u>	<u>KIA (Poss)</u>	<u>Sampans Destroyed</u>	<u>Sampans Damaged</u>	<u>Structures Destroyed</u>	<u>Structures Damaged</u>
332	230	127	13	82	21

## Miscellaneous Destroyed:

- 1 - RPG-2 Launcher
- 2 - FRC-25 Radios
- 1 - AK-47

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

8

AVGC-BC

1 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report of 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry for Period Ending  
30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR - 65 (R1)

Miscellaneous Captured:

3 - POW	1 12.7 Machine Gun
3 AK-50	1 Chicom LMG
9 AK-47	70 RPG Rounds
6 RPG-2 Launchers	8,000 AK-47 Rounds
3 RPG-7 Launchers	50 60mm Mortar Rounds
2 60mm Mortars	60 Hand Grenades
2 Radios	25lbs Documents
2 .45 Cal Pistols	10 lbs of C4
2 .50 Cal Machine Guns	10 Sets of Web Gear

On 13 February the operation was terminated.

(3) A Troop, OPCON to 199th Light Infantry Brigade, participated in operation Uniontown-Haverford (Annex A). During this operation, A Troop played a vital role in the defense of the Bien Hoa - Long Binh complex. A Troop engaged a large group of VC at 2200 hours, 31 January, vicinity YT055125. Artillery was called on this area, however with unknown results due to darkness. A Troop continuously had aero weapons teams airborne throughout the night, during both mortar and ground attacks on the US complex, inflicting heavy losses on the enemy. A Troop was again airborne at 0003 hours, 11 February, when Bien Hoa Air Base came under rocket attack. An aero weapons team immediately attacked the launching site and silenced it after only four rockets had been launched. The operation was terminated on 7 March.

(4) 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry (-) received an order on 19 February 1968 to be operational at Cu Chi by 1700 hours that afternoon, to participate in Operation Saratoga (Annex B). The necessity had arisen to maintain continuous reconnaissance and surveillance to the north and west of Saigon, to eliminate rocket launching positions. The enemy had cleverly concealed the positions in rice paddies, using dikes as launching pads, in grave yards, and tree lines. After the first site was located, diagrams and photographs were made and distributed to all units to assist in identification of the sites. The operation proved very successful with ten rocket sites being located and engaged by the squadron during the period ending 7 March.

(5) On 8 March, the squadron became OPCON to 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, and commenced operation Wilderness (Annex C). During this period the squadron confirmed that VC/NVA forces were occupying bases in War Zone C and that resupplies were entering the Republic of Vietnam in the vicinity of the Fishhook, XT5392. Supplies were being transported by truck, south along highways 246 and 244, to a storage area vicinity XT4969.

(6) C Troop was OPCON to the 9th Infantry Division from 7 March 1968 thru 23 March 1968 for Operation Truong Cong Dinh (Annex D). C Troop found several battalion size base camps from which enemy attacks along Highway 214 and the My Tho River were thought to originate.

4 CONFIDENTIAL

9

**CONFIDENTIAL**

AVGC-BC

SUBJECT: Operational Report of 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry for Period Ending  
30 April 1968, RCS - 65 (R1)

(7) On 8 March 1968, A Troop, OPCON to 199th Light Infantry Brigade, commenced Operation Valley Forge - Harrisburg (Annex E). A Troop continued the mission to find and fix enemy forces in the Bien Hoa - Long Binh area. A Troop made no major enemy contact during this operation which was terminated 17 March 1968.

(8) On 18 March, A Troop, OPCON to 199th Light Infantry Brigade, commenced operation Box Spring and continued to search for enemy forces in the Bien Hoa - Long Binh area. No major contact had been made when Harrisburg terminated on 21 March (Annex F).

(9) On 24 March, B Troop became OPCON to 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division. The troop moved its operations to Quan Loi with the remainder of the unit commuting to that area each day. The troop's area of operation extended to the north and west of Song Be (Annex G).

(10) On 26 March, A Troop was checking a possible storage area at XT082396 and found six sampans in the immediate area and two more at XT121361. All eight sampans were destroyed. Operation Box Spring was terminated on 28 March 1968 (Annex H).

(11) 30 March - 11 April, A Troop participated in operation Wilderness (Annex I). A Troop provided aerial reconnaissance for elements of the 199th Light Infantry Brigade during the road march from Long Binh to FSB Bolt, XT263374, where a forward command post was established. No major enemy contact was made during the operation.

(12) On 8 April 1968, 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry (-) commenced operation Complete Victory, remaining OPCON to the 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division. The squadron's mission was to locate VC/NVA forces, logistical bases, interdict enemy lines of communication, and conduct daily route reconnaissance along the MSR in the 1st Brigade's T.O.A. On 11 April, C Troop confirmed the presence of an enemy unit in the Ho Bo Woods area. Thirty (30) VC ran into bunkers at XT657287. Thirty-five (35) VC took cover in bunkers at XT665282. Air strikes and artillery were requested on both locations with unknown results. On 12 April, D Troop stopped a Lambretta on the MSR. None of the personnel had identification. Found in the vehicle was three bottles of whiskey, pipe tobacco, and a shopping bag of US cigarettes. One of the occupants was carrying 100,000 piasters. The vehicle and occupants were released to the Vietnamese National Police.

(13) On 15 April, 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry (-) was OPCON to 3d Brigade, 25th Division to perform bomb damage assessments on five B-52 strikes in their TAO. The strikes were scheduled throughout the day and were directed against enemy base camps, reported earlier by the

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10

AVGC-BC

1 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report of 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry for Period  
Ending 30 April 1968, ACS CSFOR - 65 (R1)

squadron. Total assessment of the strikes was:

VC KBA (BC)	TRENCH DESTROYED	BUNKERS DESTROYED	STRUCTURES DESTROYED
46	1400 meters	387	16

Evidence in the area indicated fifty to sixty bodies dragged away from the target site at XT532694, probably buried in mass graves. D Troop remained OPCON to 1st Brigade.

(14) A Troop was flying cover for the insertion of a LRRP team of the 51st LRRP Company, at YT190197. Immediately after landing, the team came into contact with an unknown size enemy force. An A Troop aero weapons team engaged the enemy and covered the extraction inflicting 6 VC KBA (BC) on the enemy force. The weapons team then requested an air strike which was put into the enemy position with unknown results.

(15) B Troop changed OPCON to the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment but retained its same mission (Anno J). In addition the troop performed specific missions assigned by the regiment, based on the enemy and tactical situation.

(16) On 16 April, the squadron, having completed the bomb damage assessments, returned to the control of the 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division.

(17) On 18 April, C Troop was performing a reconnaissance mission on the western part of War Zone C. An aero scout team reported 5 VC with a blue civilian 2½ ton truck at XT001702. The VC were engaged with automatic weapons fire with unknown results. Artillery was requested on the truck's location, destroying the vehicle.

(18) At 0110 hours, on 21 April 1968, C Troop scrambled its counter-mortar weapons team to assist an ARVN outpost under attack at XT347219. They expended on the enemy locations with unknown results and returned to Tay Ninh at 0245 hours. At 0740 hours, C Troop was instructed to insert the aero rifle platoon at XT529229 to secure a downed aircraft. The platoon completed the operation at 0850 hours with no enemy contact. At 1335 hours, D Troop secured a downed OH23 at XT265385 which was evacuated by Pipesmoke. The troop had no enemy contact on the operation. At 1750 hours, C Troop attempted to insert a LRRP team at XT597325. The slick received moderate automatic weapons fire on the LZ. The LRRP Commander immediately aborted the mission with no casualties.

(19) On 22 April 1968, the squadron became OPCON to the 25th Infantry Division, terminating OPCON to 1st Brigade. B Troop and C Troop conducted armed aerial reconnaissance with emphasis along the Van Co Dong River, Highway 1 from Trang Bang to Cu Chi, and along the axis from

6

**CONFIDENTIAL**

# CONFIDENTIAL

AVGC-BC

1 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report of 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry for Period  
Ending 30 April 1968, JCS CSFOR - 65 (R1)

Filhol Plantation south to Ton Hiep. Many new bunker complexes were sighted, however, no significant enemy contact was developed. B Troop received the additional mission of counter-mortar standby at Dau Tieng while C Troop maintained a ready reaction force, for LRRP teams, at Cu Chi. B Troop also conducted a VR along the Cambodian border from XT2824 to XS3093.

(20) A Troop became OPCON to 101st Airborne Division and continued with the same mission in the Bien Hoa - Long Binh area as before.

(21) On 23 April 1968, the squadron became OPCON, once again, to 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, with B Troop operating northwest of Duc Hoa, XS5996, and C Troop operating vicinity Ho Bo - Filhol areas. B Troop received ground fire at XT395133 from an unknown number of VC. The area was engaged with organic weapons resulting in 3 VC KIA (BC). Numerous personnel were sighted, throughout the day, in villages. Several of these were confirmed VC, wearing green and black uniforms and carrying AK-47 assault rifles but were not engaged due to many women and children in the area. All such sightings were reported to appropriate authorities. B Troop engaged an automatic weapons position, at XT347175, resulting in 2 KIA (BC) and 5 KIA possible. On 24 April, A Troop located 5 sampans at XT1858508, destroying 3 and damaging 2. B Troop located an occupied enemy base camp, on 25 April, at XT485042. Air strikes were immediately requested for the area. The target was marked by the aero scouts for the PAC and a BDA was performed at the conclusion of the strike. The results of the BDA were 27 VC KIA (BC), 40 bunkers destroyed, and 11 military structures destroyed. On 26 April, B Troop again had contact in the same general area. Several more bunkers and enemy personnel were engaged vicinity XT472023 resulting in 19 KIA (BC) and 2 KIA (Possible). C Troop conducted four BDA's for the Air Force during the day. The strikes were located at XT655286, XT605312, XT625308, and XT636303 resulting in:

<u>VC KIA</u>	<u>BUNKERS DEST</u>	<u>STRUCTURES DEST</u>	<u>SAMPANS DEST</u>	<u>SECONDARY EXPLOSIONS</u>
11	276	13	8	6

A Troop scrambled the aero rifle platoon and an aero weapons team to support the 1st Battalion (Airborne), 506th Infantry which was in contact at XT988450. The rifle platoon secured the LZ while the lift section airlifted A Company, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 506th Infantry into the LZ. Upon completion of the airlift, the aero rifle platoon was extracted with no enemy contact. On 27 April, B Troop continued to have enemy contact in the same general area as on 26 April. Six (6) VC were engaged by

CONFIDENTIAL



CONFIDENTIAL

12

AVGC-BC

1 May 1968

SUB-REPORT Operational Report of 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry for Period  
Ending 30 April 1968, RUCS CSFOR - 65 (R1)

aero weapons aircraft with 5 KBA (BC) at XT440048. B Troop sighted 18 VC at XS517943 in Khaki uniforms. An air strike was called on the position inflicting 11 KBA (BC) and destroying 20 bunkers. B Troop also killed 4 VC in the same area. AT XS577946, 25 VC were engaged with 12 KBA (BC) credited to B Troop and 2 KBA (BC) to the Air Force. The size and dispersion of the enemy elements in this area indicated a large enemy force, possibly regimental size, occupying these positions. Trail activity indicated heavy traffic had been moving south. On 28 April, B Troop had contact all day, vicinity XS5194, with small scattered groups of enemy troops. All enemy positions were engaged inflicting 17 KBA (BC). C Troop reported 14 122mm rockets at XT762171. All the rockets were completely assembled and camouflaged in two stacks outside of a bunker. Artillery was called on the area, with two direct hits on the rockets, completely destroying them. Approximately 150 personnel were moving west out of a village at XT6920 when C Troop spotted them. They all appeared to be wood cutters. A LRRP team detained two of the personnel and then requested extraction. C Troop scrambled an aero weapons team and an UH1H and extracted the team from XT69209. After interrogation, one of the detainees proved to be a guide for a VC company. On 29 April the squadron conducted a reconnaissance of the area where the POW said the company was located. C Troop killed 2 VC at XT543242 during the morning and spotted several enemy fighting positions in the area, however, no more enemy personnel were reported. B Troop regained contact at XS503952 killing 7 VC. That afternoon, B Troop was then ordered to the area where the VC company was thought to be located. A concentration of enemy personnel was located and engaged at XT542225. Results of the engagement were 11 VC KBA (BC), 4 VC KBA (Possible), and 2 secondary explosions; a cache of medical supplies, 5 stacks of NVA green uniforms, and one mortar tube destroyed. At 1950 hours that evening, C Troop spotted and destroyed 2 sampans at XS524953, with 5 KBA (BC) and one secondary explosion. On 30 April, B Troop engaged small numbers of enemy troops in scattered locations in the 1st Brigade's AO resulting in 12 VC KBA (BC). C Troop observed 4 VC and 3 sampans at XT755165. The site was engaged with 2 sampans destroyed and one secondary explosion with white smoke reaching a height of 400-500 feet. C Troop later engaged 20 VC, at XT5623, located in a trench, with 3 KBA (BC) and 5 possible KBA.

(22) During the period 23 April to 30 April, numerous VC, approximately 185, had been sighted along the Oriental River west of Duc Hoa. Their movement seemed to be in a southerly direction with their destination unknown. There were recent signs of heavy movement of supplies along the Saigon River, moving south toward Saigon. Many supply points were found and engaged, however, only small groups of VC had been sighted along the route. Most trails showed signs of heavy oxcart traffic and many loaded sampans were discovered and destroyed.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

AVGC-BC

1 May 1968

Operational Report of 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry for Period  
Ending 30 April 1968, RGS CSFOR - 65 (R1)

c. Training. During this reporting period, the squadron has had maximum participation in all allocated school courses. Quotas ranged from AH-1G training to several AAMTAP schools. All new in-country replacements received training at the 25th Infantry Division Replacement Training Center, located at Cu Chi.

(1) All training within the squadron was conducted with no loss in the operational status of the unit.

(2) School quotas filled by squadron during the period:

(a) AH-1G Schools:

Pilot Transition - 16  
Airframe Maintenance - 16  
AH-1G Familiarization - 2  
SAS - 4  
Engine Maintenance - 5  
Armament Maintenance - 14

(b) AAMTAP Schools:

UH1B-C - 5  
OH6A - 7  
T-53 - 3  
T-53-L-13 - 4  
T-63 - 9  
Supply Course - 4

(c) Others:

Replacement Training - 112  
M-16 Rifle Training (Armorer) - 8  
KY-28 (NETT) - 60  
Jungle Survival Training - 1  
XM 229/XM 429 (NETT) Familiarization - 60  
XM 229/XM 429 (NETT) Field Firing - 15

d. During the reporting period tactical moves and training did not interfere with the tactical mission of the squadron.

(1) Training days - 0

(2) Tactical movements - 0

(3) Operational days - 90

CONFIDENTIAL



CONFIDENTIAL

14

AVCC BC

1 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report of 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry for Period  
Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR - 65 (R1)

e. Intelligence. The squadron has sighted and reported an extremely large volume of intelligence information during this period. Lines of communication from Cambodia into the III Corps Tactical Zone have been plotted and interdicted. The enemy has been located in many base camps and hit hard. The enemy has been tracked and repeatedly harassed while moving to new locations. The squadron has definitely hampered the enemy's tactical and logistical plans as evidenced by the 888 enemy soldiers killed during this quarter.

(1) The squadron collection plan will remain in effect until new tactical areas of interest are assigned. The EEI for the troops is as follows:

- (a) Determine LOC
- (b) Determine Logistical Bases
- (c) Locate VC/NVA Units
- (d) Establish Trailmaps

(2) During the period covered by this report, coordination between the S2 and the artillery liaison officer was made in an attempt to improve the artillery H & I Program. The spot reports, which the troops sent in, were checked by the ALO and the S2 for possible targets. Those selected were relayed to the artillery unit who integrated them into their H & I fires that night.

(3) During the period covered by this report the squadron flew several fire fly missions in conjunction with the 25th Infantry Division. On several occasions a mission was flown with a fire fly ship and two UH1C's, from the squadron, while the other times a SLAR aircraft, followed by a fire fly and two UH1C's was employed. Both of these missions were ineffective, largely due to the fog and ground haze. An aircraft modified with a infra-red capability would greatly enhance squadron's ability to interdict the VC/NVA during the hours of darkness.

f. Organization. There have been no organizational changes during this quarter. The current organizational structure and troop locations are listed in Annex K.

g. Personnel.

(1) During the reporting period the following changes occurred in command and staff positions:

CONFIDENTIAL

## CONFIDENTIAL

AVGC-BC

1 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report of 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry for Period  
Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR - 65 (R1)

(a) Lieutenant Colonel Evans J. Guidroz, 075200, assumed duties as Squadron Executive Officer on 14 February 1968, as Major Nicholas G. Hylwa, 04031069, was reassigned to Headquarters, USA MACV, APO 96222.

(b) Lieutenant Colonel William W. Brannon Jr., 081386, assumed duties as Squadron Commander on 1 March 1968, as Lieutenant Colonel Christopher B. Sinclair, 028265, was reassigned to 12th Combat Aviation Group as Deputy Group Commander.

(c) Captain Harvey E. Turner, 095254, assumed duties as Headquarters Commandant and Headquarters Troop Commander, on 6 March 1968, replacing Major Jay T. Butterfield, 05405277.

(d) Major Jay T. Butterfield, 05405277, assumed duties as Squadron S5 on 6 March 1968.

(e) Major Robert A. Witcher, 091539, assumed command of A Troop on 12 March 1968, replacing Major Nathan M. Pulliam, 077633.

(f) Major Nathan M. Pulliam, 077633, assumed duties as Squadron S3 on 12 March 1968, replacing Major James T. McManus, 077894.

(g) Major James T. McManus, 077894, assumed command of B Troop on 12 March 1968, replacing Major Wayne W. Shehorn, 0F106819, who was reassigned to 269th Combat Aviation Battalion.

h. Health, Morale, and Welfare. The health of the squadron continues to be excellent. The morale of the squadron's personnel remains high despite a heavy work load. All semi-permanent buildings in the squadron area have been completed. Roads, drainage ditches, and boardwalks are 50% complete.

i. Infusion. The infusion program is in the final stages and will be completed by the middle of May. The following Officers, Warrant Officers, and Enlisted Men were infused during this reporting period:

	OUTGOING	INCOMING
OFF	6	6
WO	7	8
EM	26	28

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

16

AVGC-BC

1 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report for 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry Period  
Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR - 65 (R1)

j. Awards and Decorations. The following awards and decorations were recommended and approved during this period:

<u>NAME OF AWARD</u>	<u>RECOMMENDED</u>	<u>APPROVED</u>
Medal of Honor	1	0
Silver Star	12	2
Distinguished Flying Cross	33	6
Soldier's Medal	2	0
Bronze Star Medal "V"	17	8
Bronze Star Medal	9	0
Air Medal "V"	33	2
Air Medal	247	250
Army Commendation Medal "V"	21	1
Army Commendation Medal	45	30
Purple Heart	38	18
Combat Infantry Badge	51	0

k. Friendly Losses. Personnel losses for the squadron during this period are as follows:

	<u>KIA</u>			<u>WIA</u>			<u>MIA</u>		
	<u>OFF</u>	<u>WO</u>	<u>EM</u>	<u>OFF</u>	<u>WO</u>	<u>EM</u>	<u>OFF</u>	<u>WO</u>	<u>EM</u>
Feb	1	1	1	6	1	14	0	0	0
Mar	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Apr	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	0

12

CONFIDENTIAL

# CONFIDENTIAL

AVGC-BC

1 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report for 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR - 65 (R1)

## 1. Unit Strength. Unit strength as of 30 April 1968:

### (1) Military

Subordinate Unit	Officers		WO		EM		Total	
	Auth	O/H	Auth	O/H	Auth	O/H	Auth	O/H
HQ Trp	19	22	16	14	181	171	216	207
A Trp	16	18	30	23	121	118	169	159
B Trp	18	18	30	22	121	129	169	169
C Trp	18	17	30	24	121	115	169	156
D Trp	5	5	0	0	127	113	132	118
39th TC (Det)	0	1	0	0	68	93	68	94
520th (Det)	0	0	0	0	0	50	0	50
3/17 ACS	78	81	106	83	739	789	923	953

### (2) Civilian

Subordinate Unit	DAC		VN		3d Natl		Contractor
	Auth	O/H	Auth	O/H	Auth	O/H	
HQ Trp	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
A Trp	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
B Trp	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
C Trp	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
D Trp	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
39th TC	0	23	0	0	0	0	0

m. Aircraft status. Squadron aircraft status, as of 30 April 1968, is contained in Annex L.

n. Operational Results. Squadron operational results for the reported period are contained in Annex M.

CONFIDENTIAL

18

AVGC-BC

1 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report for 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry Period  
Ending 30 April 1968, PUS CSFOR - 65 (R1)

o. Logistics. No logistical problems were encountered during the reporting period. The daily average consumption rate of ammunition is listed in Annex N.

p. Signal. The squadron has maintained excellent communications throughout the period.

(1) The tactical operations center communications consists of the following:

- (a) FM, 25th Infantry Division (Secure)
- (b) FM, Squadron Command (Non Secure)
- (c) FM, Squadron Op/Intell (Non Secure)
- (d) FM, 25th Infantry Division Artillery (Non Secure)
- (e) HF, AN/GRC 106 Squadron Command (Non Secure)
- (f) UHF, Ground Mounted 51EX Squadron (Non Secure)

(2) Squadron communications center maintains the following teletype nets:

- (a) Land line teletype to 12th CAG.
- (b) VSC-2 radio teletype to:

25th Infantry Division  
A Trp, 3/17th located in Long Binh

(3) Squadron wire net and telephone trunks, using a SB 86 switchboard:

- (a) Tay Ninh Switchboard (4 lines)
- (b) II FFV TCC (1 line)
- (c) 25th Infantry Division TCC (1 line)
- (d) AAF 25th Infantry Division (1 line)
- (e) 25th Infantry Division Main (1 line)
- (f) 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division TCC (1 line)

(4) The squadron maintains an FM net for administration/logistics which is not presently being used.

(5) Due to the distance between forward troop locations, a retrans station is maintained on Nui Ba Din Mountain.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

1 May 1968

AVGC-BC

SUBJECT: Operational Report for 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry Period  
Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR - 65 (R1)

2. Section 2, Lessons Learned: Commander's Observations, Evaluations, Recommendations.

a. Personnel. None

b. Operations. Desirability of Armored Personnel Carriers in Cavalry Troop.

OBSERVATION: Armored personnel carriers are desirable in the cavalry troop.

EVALUATION: On several occasions, during zone and area reconnaissance, areas were inaccessible to wheel vehicles. Additionally, cross country movement in wheel vehicles is difficult, many times impossible. The squadron's reconnaissance capability would be greatly enhanced by the substitution of APC's for some wheel vehicles. The tracked vehicles would give the cavalry troop some armor protection and the advantage of additional firepower without detracting from its organization.

RECOMMENDATIONS: That the cavalry troop have nine Armored Personnel Carriers substituted for wheel vehicles.

c. Training. Scout Observer Training.

OBSERVATION: Scout observers must be selected individuals (11D20) with the desire, a keen mind, and a broad military background.

EVALUATION: It has been found that a good scout observer is hard to train; but once trained, is an integral part of the scout platoon. The observer must be able to operate the aircraft's radios, read a map from altitude, and must know what to look for on the ground. It is also desirable that the observer be given a limited amount of flight training, sufficient to safely land the aircraft. If the pilot is seriously wounded while in flight, the observer must be able to fly the aircraft to a safe area and execute a safe landing. This will prevent the loss of the entire crew as well as the aircraft.

RECOMMENDATION: That all individuals selected to be scout observers be closely screened prior to commencing training and that the observer be given sufficient flight training to safely land the aircraft.

d. Intelligence. None

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

20

AVGC-BC

1 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report for 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry Period Ending  
30 April 1968, RCS CSTOR - 65 (31)

e. Logistics. Logistical Problems of the Non-Divisional Air Cavalry Squadron.

OBSERVATION: Air Cavalry Squadron needs additional personnel and equipment to support logistical operations.

EVALUATION: This squadron is organized under TOE 17-95 (T) which specifies that it is organic to the airmobile Air Cavalry Division. It is a well known fact that in order for a divisional unit to be self-sufficient, additional support elements must be added. This has not been done for Air Cavalry Squadrons with the exception of aircraft direct support maintenance. This squadron was first stationed at Di An where class II and IV supplies were requisitioned from the 266th S&S at Long Binh. Upon moving to Tay Ninh (approx 60 miles from Long Binh) II and IV items had to be obtained from the 228th S&S at Tay Ninh. The squadron has the choice of transporting, within its capability, the earlier requisitioned items up from Long Binh (2 to 3 days by truck) or cancelling all items at the 266th and requisitioning from the 228th S&S, with an additional waiting time of 2 to 3 months. By adding additional personnel and equipment to form a Supply and Service Troop, the added support elements would be the equivalent of one squadron's share of the Divisional Support Command. This suggested Supply and Service Troop could deal directly with depots and thus prevent the serious resupply problem which plagues this organization at the present time. Moves throughout the Corps Tactical Zone would not bring the resupply problem to a complete standstill, but allow for an uninterrupted flow of supplies. To attach the squadron to a division for logistics would be quite difficult because in the past quarter, elements of this squadron have been under Operational Control (OPCON) of the 1st, 9th, and 25th Infantry Divisions, 101st Airborne Division and 199th Light Infantry Brigade. The OPCON concept works well from the operational standpoint but presents many problems in the field of logistics. If the separate Air Cavalry Squadron is to remain a permanent organization of the army the appropriate logistical support must be incorporated in its structure. This theory is in fact no different than the support included in separate cavalry regiments or Light Infantry Brigades. A study should be conducted to determine then, if a supply and service troop should be added to the Air Cavalry Squadron, or if it is sufficient to add the support personnel and equipment to the present squadron structure.

RECOMMENDATION: That a study be conducted to determine the most favorable solution to this problem.

f. Organization. An MTOE incorporating an increased maintenance capability for each air cavalry troop is presently under study and will be submitted when finalized.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

1 May 1968

AVGC-BC

SUBJECT: Operational Report for 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry Period  
Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSTOR - 65 (R1)

g. Other.

(1) Modification to WABTOC

(a) OBSERVATION: A modification is desirable in the present WABTOC to increase usable space and provide for greater ease of movement.

(b) EVALUATION: A modification used on the squadron's WABTOC construction was to increase the heights of the WABTOC side walls to seven feet instead of the normal five feet. This allows wall lockers to be put against the side walls, rather than in the center of the structure. This alternation allows more usable floor space and increased freedom of movement, particularly during mortar/rocket attacks when rapid evacuation is desirable.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That WABTOC tent side walls be increased to a height of seven feet.

(2) AIK Funds

(a) OBSERVATION: Increased use of AIK Funds for construction enables the unit to have increased soldier man-hours for combat missions.

(b) EVALUATION: AIK funds provide for a major source of labor when a unit relocates to a new area. If the unit is not given a stand down to prepare the area for occupancy, the AIK fund is invaluable for getting minimum troop protection quickly. This unit utilizes an average of 600 sandbags per individual to construct a bunker with overhead cover and to build a sandbag wall around the WABTOC sleeping quarters. The total of 600 sandbags is derived by this unit's experience, billeting 10 men per WABTOC tent and constructing 15 man bunkers. If troop labor is utilized, the filling and stacking of sandbags takes three man-days during which time the man is not available for combat missions. The same amount of work can be accomplished in five man-days by local civilians at an approximate cost of 750\$ VN. This figure is based on a pay scale of 100\$ VN per day for the man stacking the bags and 1\$ VN per sandbag filled. The squadron has found the 1\$ VN per sandbag method a more economical and productive payment system than a flat rate per day method. An attempt has been made to equate the amount of troop labor utilized for the tasks involved in establishing a base camp to the amount and cost of civilian labor required for the same tasks. The following items were equated and compared in cost of civilians labor and time, to military combat time lost:

CONFIDENTIAL



CONFIDENTIAL

1 May 1968

22

AVGC-BC

SUBJECT: Operational Report for 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry Period  
Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSTOR - 65 (R1).

a. Amount of production versus cost

	<u>GI Production</u>	<u>Civilian Production &amp; Cost.</u>
1 Filling Sandbags	150 per day	60 per day @ 100\$ VN per day 150 per day @ 1\$ VN per bag.
2 Board Walk Construction	40ft per day	25ft per day @ 100\$ per day.
3 Stacking Sandbags	800 per day	300 per day @ 100\$ VN per day

b. Man-days versus cost

	<u>GI</u>	<u>Civilian</u>
1 15 Man Bunker	10	13 = 1750\$ VN
2 Sandbag a 16 x 32' Tent	23	28 = 3750\$ VN
3 1000' Boardwalk	25	40 = 4000\$ VN

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That whenever combat units are relocated to areas where a stay of any appreciable length of time is anticipated, sufficient AIC funds be programmed to allow the use of civilian labor, rather than military labor, in construction of the base camp. That amount of funds allocated for each construction be based on an approximate rate of 1000\$ VN per man in the unit.

WILLIAM W. BRANNON Jr.  
LTC, Armor  
Commanding

ANNEXES:

- A - Uniontown-Haverford
- B - Saratoga
- C - Wilderness
- D - Truong Cong Dinh
- E - Valley Forge-Harrisburg
- G - Complete Victory
- K - Squadron Organization
- L - Aircraft Status
- M - Operational Statistics
- N - Daily Average Consumption
- O - Monthly Flying Hours

DISTRIBUTION: A

- 3 cy 12th CAG
- 3 cy USARV
- 2 cy USARPAC
- 1 File

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23

WFOC-SC (1 May 68) 1st Ind

SUBJECT: Operational Report of Headquarters, 3rd Squadron, 17th Air  
Cavalry for Period Ending 30 April 1968 RCS CSFOR - 65 (RI)

TO: HEADQUARTERS, 12TH AVIATION GROUP, APO 96266 22 May 1968

TO: Commanding General, II MCRGIV, APO 96266

1. In compliance with AR 525-15 and USARV Regulation 525-15, one copy of subject report is forwarded.
2. This headquarters has reviewed subject report and the following comment is made:

Reference page 15, para 2b: A request for 180 day loan of Personnel Carriers was submitted by this unit and disapproved by USARV G-3. Disapproval action was effected as this item would destroy the airmobile concept of the Air Cavalry Troop. Additional research is being conducted by this headquarters on the suitability and availability of the V-100 Commando Car for the D Troop of the Air Cavalry Squadrons.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

*James E. Lybrand*  
JAMES E. LYBRAND  
Major, Infantry  
Asst Adjutant

CONFIDENTIAL

24

AVFBC-RE-H (1 May 68) 2d Ind

SUBJECT: Operational Report of 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry for Period Ending  
30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

DA, HQ II FFORCEV, APO San Francisco 96266 24 JUN 1968

THRU: Commanding General, 1st Aviation Brigade, ATTN: AVBA-C, APO 96307

Commanding General, US Army Vietnam, ATTN: AVHGC(DST), APO 96375

Commander, US Army Pacific, ATTN: GPOP-OT, APO 96558

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, Department of the  
Army, Washington, D.C. 20310

1. (U) Subject report is forwarded.
2. (C) This command has reviewed the attached Operational Report - Lessons Learned of the 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry and concurs with the report as in-dorsed with the following exceptions:

a. Para 13 a (4), Annex B. The 79th Engineer Group has available standard plans for 10 types of bunkers. The 588th Engineer Battalion (part of the 79th Engineer Group) located at the home station of the 3/17 Air Cavalry Squadron has the normal mission of providing designs, to include bills of materials, for standard bunkers. Bunkers are normally constructed on a self-help basis. Materials for construction are normally drawn through regular logistical channels.

b. Para 15 d, Annex B. This situation is one that is habitually forced upon the aviation commander who has organic gunships. Admittedly the commitment of light fire teams to support ground units in contact does detract from the principal mission of aviation units. However, the light fire team has proved to be a means of providing accurate, effective and responsive fire support. For this reason, the support of ground units should be considered a secondary mission of all aviation units. If the tactical situation requires immediate fire support for units in contact, and if this support can be provided temporarily without significantly degrading the unit's mission, then valid requests must be honored. Close coordination between the supported and supporting unit commanders will clarify roles and missions.

c. Para 15 a, Annex B and para 15 b, Annex D. There is no standing requirement that units involved in a change of operational control status be notified 24 hours in advance of that change. This headquarters does attempt to give as much notice as possible, however, it must be understood that

20

CONFIDENTIAL

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24 JUN 1968


AVFBC-RE-H

SUBJECT: Operational Report of 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry for Period Ending  
30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

on occasion tactical or other considerations may demand that such changes be made rapidly and without a great deal of advance warning.

d. Reference para 2b. This headquarters does not concur in the recommendation to substitute armored personnel carriers for wheeled vehicles. Such a change would affect adversely the unit's ability to perform the mission for which it was designed.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

  
WARREN J. ENLISS  
CPT, AGC  
Asst AG

**CONFIDENTIAL**

26

AVBA-C (1 May 68) 3d Ind

SUBJECT: Operational Report of 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry for Period  
Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)(U)

DA, HEADQUARTERS, 1ST AVIATION BRIGADE, APO 96384 JUN 30 1968

THRU: Commanding General, United States Army Vietnam, ATTN: AVHGC-DST,  
APO 96375  
Commander in Chief, United States Army Pacific, ATTN: GPOP-OT,  
APO 96558

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, Department of the  
Army, Washington, D. C. 20310

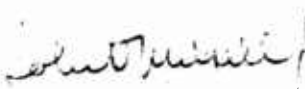
1. (U) This Headquarters has reviewed this report, considers it to be  
adequate, and concurs with the contents as indorsed.

2. (U) The following additional comment is considered pertinent:

a. Paragraph 1p(1)(f), page 14. The use of an AN/ARC-51 BX for  
this purpose is a misuse of a valuable asset. 1st Aviation Brigade  
Signal Supply Officer is attempting to obtain an AN/VRC-24 for this unit.

b. Paragraph 2e, page 16. This headquarters concurs that addition-  
al support personnel are required in a separate Air Cavalry Squadron.  
A study is currently being staffed concerning a proposal for standardiz-  
ing the separate Air Cavalry Squadron to include the addition of sup-  
port personnel. When completed, this study will provide the basis for  
MTOE actions to improve the support capability.

FOR THE COMMANDER:



JOHN D. MIXSELL, JR.

CPT. AGC

Assistant Adjutant General

27

G 3  
114157

AVHGC-DST (1 May 68) 4th Ind (U) CPT Arnold/ms/LBN 4485  
SUBJECT: Operational Report of 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry for Period  
Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR - 65 (RL)

HEADQUARTERS, US ARMY VIETNAM, APO San Francisco 96375 13 JUL 1968

TO: Commander in Chief, United States Army, Pacific, ATTN: GPOP-DT,  
APO 96558

1. This headquarters has reviewed the Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the quarterly period ending 30 April 1968 from Headquarters, 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry.

2. Comments follow:

a. Reference item concerning modification to WABTOC, page 17, paragraph 2g(1): Concur. The United States Army Engineer Construction Agency's (USAECAV) standard design for WABTOC buildings indicate that the walls should be 7'10". Future WABTOC will be constructed to this standard.

b. Reference item concerning AIK Funds, page 17, paragraph 2g(2): Nonconcur. USARV Regulation 616-3 dated 24 November 1967 outlines the authorized use of the Daily Hire Local National program administered through the AIK Funds. AIK Funds are controlled and bulk allocated from MACV to USARV. Appendix I, USARV Regulation 616-3 prescribes the request be submitted to this headquarters for validation and subsequent allocation of funds. This regulation permits the hiring of unskilled labor to fill sandbags and construct field fortifications. The hiring of skilled labor, such as carpenters, is not permitted nor is a change in the regulation recommended, since it would compete in a limited labor market for skills required on engineer direct hire labor forces.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

*C. S. Nakatsukasa*  
C. S. NAKATSUKASA  
Captain, AGC  
Assistant Adjutant General

Copies furnished:  
HQ, 1st Avn Bde  
HQ, 3d Sqdn, 17th Cav

GPOP-DT (1 May 68) 5th Ind (U)

SUBJECT: Operational Report of HQ, 3d Squadron, 17th Cav for Period  
Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

HQ, US Army, Pacific, APO San Francisco 96558 15 AUG 1968

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, Department of the  
Army, Washington, D. C. 20310

This headquarters has evaluated subject report and forwarding indorse-  
ments and concurs in the report as indorsed.

FOR THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF:



C.L. SHORTT  
CPT, AGC  
Asst AG

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ANNEX A Operational Report of 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry for Period  
Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

SUBJECT: Operation Uniontown-Haverford from 21 January 1968 thru 7 March 1968.

SECTION I

## A. NARRATIVE:

On 21 January 1968, Troop A, 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry moved from FSB Nashua XT9832 to Di An and on 27 February 1968, moved from Di An to Long Binh to support the 199th LIB on operation Uniontown and Haverford.

During this period, Troop A, flew 6044 sorties and 2549 hours in support of the operation. The scout platoon flew 1261 hours, weapons platoon 902 hours and lift section 386 hours. Lift ships airlifted 1792 passengers and 21,150 lbs of cargo during this period of operation Uniontown and Haverford.

Troop A, 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry accounted for the following confirmed enemy losses:

1. Enemy killed 96
2. Enemy wounded 12
3. sampans destroyed 14; damaged 2
4. Structures destroyed 45; damaged 4
5. 1 Rocket site destroyed
6. 30lbs of salt captured and destroyed
7. 4,300 lbs of rice captured and destroyed
8. 2 122mm rockets (minus warheads) captured
9. Approximately 50 lbs of food and clothing destroyed

Friendly losses of this unit due to hostile action during the reporting period were.

1. 7 WIA
2. 8 UH-1C damaged
3. 5 OH-6A damaged

During operation Uniontown-Haverford the following ammunition was expended:

1. 7.62mm	439,600
2. 5.56mm	8,878
3. 2.75 Rockets	2,944
4. 40mm	1,485
5. M79	422
6. Smoke	321
7. HG	216
8. WP	250
9. C-S	21



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- B. 1. Training days - (No formal training-constant OJT)  
2. Number movement days - 0  
3. Number days operational - 47

C. No major difficulties were encountered during this reporting period.

### SECTION II Lessons Learned

1. ITEM: VRC-24 Radio (UHF)

DISCUSSION: UHF capability is almost a necessity if the troop operations center is to gather quickly all the details for the troop aircraft's missions. This radio is authorized but has never been issued.

OBSERVATION: The VRC-24 UHF radio would enable the troop operations center to get immediate contact with all of its aircraft which are flying. With aircraft supporting many units and working on the supported units FM channels, it is very difficult to break into the various FM nets to get the details of action or spot reports. Also an urgent change of mission is often delayed because of the lack of communication caused by the crowded FM nets on ground unit frequencies.

2. ITEM: Combat Tracker Team

DISCUSSION: As an aid in the accomplishment of its mission, the troop should have assigned or attached a combat tracker team to work with its rifle platoon. The CTT should have one or more tracker dogs with handlers and trained tracker-security personnel.

OBSERVATION: The rifle platoon is used as either a small ready reaction force or as a recon platoon. Its mission is to destroy the enemy or gain intelligence with a minimum of friendly losses. A combat tracker team would be a great help in finding the enemy and a scout dog would also alert the platoon to enemy ambusher. On two occasions, Troop A's rifle platoon has been ambushed with two US KIA and several WIA. They have never been ambushed while working with a tracker team. A Tracker team of the 199th LIB has been successfully used when the rifle platoon pursued enemy first contacted by LRP teams.

3. ITEM: Car-15

DISCUSSION: Aviators should have as a personal weapon the car-15. The .38 cal pistol does not have the range or the fire power to allow the downed aviator to adequately protect himself in a counter-guerilla situation in jungle terrain.

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OBSERVATION: The small, light weight car-15 is an ideal weapon for the aviator to carry as his personal weapon. It is small enough to be easily carried in the helicopter. Its range and firepower are enough for the crew of a downed helicopter to hold the enemy far enough away to make rescue possible. The aviators present weapon, the .38 cal pistol, is inadequate for the pilots protection needs.

4. ITEM: Manpacked personnel detector. (Commonly called Sniffer Machine)

DISCUSSION: The manpacked personnel detector can be a integral part of the intelligence gathering effort in an entire area of operations. At least two of these machines and the personnel to operate them should be assigned to the air cavalry squadron headquarters and made available at troop level on a request basis.

OBSERVATION: The people detector capability of the manpacked personnel detector machine makes it ideal for planning of scout missions and H & I artillery fire. Scouts can be sent to reading areas and the machine can cover suspected enemy locations to confirm or deny reports. Large areas can be covered in a short time. Even used alone, the machine helps accomplish the intelligence gathering mission of the air cavalry.

5. ITEM: Aero rifle platoon as reaction reconnaissance force to back up long range patrol teams.

DISCUSSION: An excellent use of the aero rifle platoon is that of reaction to enemy situations initiated by LRP teams. The platoon can determine further what the enemy situation is, develop it further, destroy the enemy within capabilities and, if necessary, rescue the LRP team.

OBSERVATION: The rifle platoon has been used successfully to land at points of LRP team contact and develop the enemy situations originated by the LRP teams. Organic weapon ships and scouts also assist. Experience shows that the LRP team must stay at the point of contact until the rifle platoon reaches the team for link-up. The LRP team then briefs the rifle platoon and all pursue the enemy to develop the situation. Enemy is destroyed within capabilities. If situation and time permit, a combat tracker team is inserted with the rifle platoon. A larger ready reaction force must always back up the rifle platoon, to exploit enemy contact or rescue the rifles from a superior force.

ROBERT A. WITCHER  
Major, Armor  
Commanding

ANNEX B Operational Report of 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry for Period Ending  
30 April 1968 DCS GSFOR-65 (R1)

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report

1. NAME OF OPERATION: Operation SARATOGA
2. DATE OF OPERATION: 19 February 1968 thru 7 March 1968
3. LOCATION: Nau Nghia and Gia Dinh Provinces
4. COMMAND HEADQUARTERS: 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry
5. REPORTING OFFICER: William W. Brannon Jr., LTC, Commanding
6. TASK ORGANIZATION:

A Troop, Major Nathan M Pulliam, Commanding (OPCON to 199th Light Infantry Brigade).

B Troop, Major Wayne T. Shehorn, Commanding  
D Troop, 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry (OPCON)

C Troop, Major Gary E. Luck, Commanding  
25th Aviation Battalion (-) (OPCON)

D Troop, Captain Russell W. Mengel, Commanding

7. SUPPORTING FORCES: None

8. INTELLIGENCE:

a. When the 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry was committed to operation Saratoga, elements of the 9th VC Division and 7th VC Division, as well as Local Force Battalions, were conducting offensive operations in and around the Saigon complex. During this period the VC/NVA had the capability to conduct coordinated battalion size attacks on installations or US Fire Support Bases and harass friendly units with rocket and mortar attacks.

**CONFIDENTIAL****b. Terrain and Weather:**

(1) General: The TAOR was bounded generally by the Saigon River on the East, Highway #1 on the West, District of Go Vap on the South and the Michelin Plantation on the North. (Annex A Operations Overlay)

**(2) Terrain:**

(a) Observation and fields of fire ranged from limited in the Filhol and Ho Bo areas to excellent in the rice paddies near the Hoc Mon Canal.

(b) Obstacles - Throughout the TAOR there were no natural or artificial obstacles which impeded the reconnaissance or movement of the Squadron.

(c) Concealment - The hours of darkness and early morning fog provided the VC/NVA with natural concealment from air activity. Once the fog lifted the enemy had to remain in his bunker complexes and huts to remain undetected.

(d) Key Terrain - Highway #1 was selected as key terrain since this is the route by which convoys move to resupply the 25th Infantry Division units.

(e) Avenues of Approach - Michelin Plantation - Trapezoid - Ho Bo - Filhol - Saigon.

**(3) Weather:**

(a) Visibility - During early morning hours visibility was restricted to 3 miles or less due to fog. At approximately 0900 hours the fog would lift enabling the aeroscouts to conduct armed visual reconnaissance.

(b) Temperature - The temperature averaged in the high eighties throughout the operation.

**c. Intelligence During the Operation: (Annex B Intelligence Overlay)**

(1) Enemy Units: The VC/NVA units that were identified within the Squadron's TAOR were the 271st, 272d, 101st and the 88th Regiments.

(2) Rocket sites which the enemy used were in the vicinity of XT8104 and XT8204, all east of Hoc Mon.

(3) Lines of communication for the VC/NVA extended from the Michelin Plantation - Trapezoid - Hoc Mon.

(4) Logistical Bases. Several large bunker complexes were discovered vicinity XT5930 and XT6822, consisting of over 75 bunkers in each complex. The small complexes consisted of approximately 10 bunkers each. All of the complexes were located along the Saigon River in Binh Duong and Nau Nghia Province.

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## 9. MISSION:

Conduct armed aerial reconnaissance in assigned areas to find, fix, and destroy enemy rocket positions.

## 10. CONCEPT OF OPERATION:

3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry (-) will provide continuous reconnaissance in force north and west of Tan Son Nhut to locate and destroy all enemy rocket positions. Squadron will receive OPCON of D Troop, 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry and 25th Aviation Battalion (-). Maximum effort will be maintained in AO both day and night.

## 11. EXECUTION:

## a. Movement:

On 19 February 1968, the squadron was given the mission to provide continuous reconnaissance and surveillance in the Tan Son Nhut rocket belt. To accomplish this, the Squadron Tactical Operations Center had to move a jump command post to Cu Chi by air. The jump command post was composed of elements of S3, S2, Communications, Artillery Liaison Team and an Air Force Forward Air Control Team. All elements were operational by 1700 hours at Cu Chi. Troop and squadron field trains remained at Tay Ninh while limited organizational maintenance support was sent to Cu Chi. D Troop remained at Tay Ninh.

## b. 19 February 1968 - 23 February 1968:

Operations during this period were characterized by intense armed aerial reconnaissance during the day and intense armed aerial surveillance at night. Both air cavalry troops maintained reconnaissance teams in their assigned sectors during the day performing detailed aerial reconnaissance, searching for enemy rocket positions, suspected enemy storage areas, and any signs of enemy movement. Enemy activity was very evident throughout the area which led the aeroscouts to pinpointing not only enemy locations but also rocket storage areas and launching sites. Night activities required several aeroweapons teams to be airborne throughout the night, prepared to bring fire on any sites launching rockets within the division area of responsibility. Controlling those teams was an airborne command and control helicopter, with flares aboard, as well as a fixed wing spotter plane, with an artillery forward observer. When targets were spotted at night, the aeroweapons teams would engage immediately, followed by an artillery saturation of the area. Flares were dropped as needed to illuminate the target area. On 19 February 1968, B Troop located a rocket site at XT852054, composed of twelve launching positions. Reconnaissance of the area showed several signs of recent enemy activity, however, no enemy were sighted. Firing from the site had been conducted at some previous time, as evidenced by the back-blast areas clearly evident on the ground. Necessary photographs were taken and sketches made for intelligence purposes. (Annex C: Sketch Rocket Launching Site). Upon completion of these activities, artillery fires were placed on the site destroying several positions and heavily damaging the rest. Enemy bunkers in the area of the site were also destroyed or damaged by artillery. On 21 February 1968, an element of the 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry was engaged in heavy

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contact at XS719922. An aëroweapons team of D Troop, 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry was sent to support the Saber element in contact. The teams received heavy automatic weapons fire and one UH1C was shot down, landing just south of the contact. Shortly afterwards, the 3d Brigade Commander was shot down at the same location. C Troop immediately dispatched a scout team, a weapons team and one UH1H to the area to provide security for both aircraft until ground forces arrived. One of the OH6A immediately landed at the site and extracted the Brigade Commander, despite heavy enemy fire in the area. C Troop's aëroweapons team, combined with Saber elements, soon surpressed the enemy fire enabling the UH1H to extract the crew of the other downed aircraft. The following day both C Troop and the 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry went back into the same area. C Troop located an estimated VC company, directed Saber to the enemy, supported him, and was credited with 30 VC KBA (BC). On 19 February 1968, B Troop received a report from 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry, of rockets being fired from XT817021. A scout team was immediately sent to that location and spotted the launching site. The scouts then proceeded to lead elements of the battalion to that location. While enroute, the element came in contact with an unknown number of VC, which B Troop immediately took under fire. Upon termination of the contact, a ground search was made of the launching site and all positions were destroyed. This combined technique, in both contacts, proved very valuable. In one instance, a complete search of the site was conducted as well as complete destruction, while the scout team provided the security for the completion of the above task. In the other, the scouts pinpointed the enemy and directed friendly troops to the point of contact, enabling the troops to maneuver and route the enemy. During this period D Troop had one platoon in Di An, packing organization equipment for movement to Tay Ninh. One platoon was airlifted to Cu Chi each day to act as ready reaction force for the squadron.

c. 24 February 1968

D Troop, 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry was inserted at XS693363 to exploit intelligence information gathered by C Troop. Recent activity had been noted around bunkers in the area and VC had been spotted in the general area on several occasions. D Troop was inserted at 1020 hours, methodically searched the area surrounding the LZ, and then proceeded toward the bunker complex. With air cover provided by C Troop, "Blue Tiger" assualted the area and searched the bunkers. Many signs of the enemy were found, including clothing and two CHICOM Gas Masks, however, no enemy personnel were encountered. Extraction was completed at 1215 hours vicinity XS706971.

d. 25 February 1968 thru 7 March 1968.

During this period the enemy became either bolder in his actions or more desperate in his attempt to destroy US Forces. The VC were not using their normal tactics of trying to hide during the day but rather engaged our aircraft on almost every mission. On 27 February 1968, an OH6A from B Troop was on a low level reconnaissance when he received automatic weapons fire at XT843043. The aircraft took four hits but the aviator was able to land safely at Cu Chi. On 28 February 1968, a light fire team from A Company, 25th Aviation Battalion, on a night surveillance mission, spotted a rocket site launching rockets toward Ton San Nhut Air Base. The Diamond Heads

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immediately struck and silenced the target with miniguns and rocket fire. The following morning a reconnaissance of the area credited them with 2 VC KIA (BC) and the rocket position partially destroyed. D Troop conducted a road sweep from Tay Ninh to Go Dau Ha. They encountered three roadblocks, all unguarded, and were ordered to XT458216, site of a blown bridge. A dismounted patrol checking the bridge site received automatic weapons fire. Fire was returned resulting in 1 VC KIA (BC) and 1 VC KIA (Possible). On 2 March 1968, B Troop was in support of C Company, 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry, at XT847035, who was in heavy contact. Both aircraft were engaged with heavy enemy automatic weapons fire resulting in one aircraft receiving four hits and the other ship five. The team was credited with 5 VC KIA (BC). On 4 March 1968, D Troop conducted a route sweep from Tay Ninh to XT458216, south of Go Dau Ha. They proceeded to secure the engineer team rebuilding the bridge previously mentioned. A mounted patrol engaged 1 squad of VC at XT447226 resulting in 4 VC KIA (BC) with no friendly casualties or damage. At 1800 hours the squadron command post closed out at Cu Chi and returned to Tay Ninh. During the course of the operation, initially, no movement had been sighted departing the Saigon area. All indications showed the enemy remaining in place with some indications of resupplies moving toward the Saigon area by sampan and foot traffic. Toward the end of this period, however, indications started to show some movement away from the Saigon area toward the northwest. Small groups of enemy were spotted moving north and engaged. Sampans were spotted, at night, by flare illumination, moving north and destroyed. Activity the last few days became less than at any previous time. On 7 March 1968, C Troop was placed OPCON to the 9th Infantry Division and D Troop was placed OPCON to 4th Battalion, 23d Infantry.

## 12. RESULTS:

### a. Friendly:

	KHA	WHA
Officers	0	1
Warrant Officers	0	0
Enlisted Men	0	0

### b. Enemy:

- (1) VC/NVA (BC) - 80
- (2) VC/NVA KIA (Poss) - 76
- (3) Military Structures Destroyed - 49
- (4) Military Structures Damaged - 11
- (5) Sampans Destroyed - 51
- (6) Sampans Damaged - 11
- (7) Rocket Sites Destroyed - 4
- (8) Rocket Sites Damaged - 6
- (9) Miscellaneous Destroyed

6 - 105mm Rounds  
 1 - 60mm Round  
 1 - PRC-25 Radio  
 10 - 82mm Rounds

### c. All Bomb Damage Assessments were conducted by aerial reconnaissance.

32



## 13. ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES

## a. Supply

## (1) Class I

(a) Difficulties were experienced in providing B and C Troops with hot meals. The problem was partially solved by locating a unit at Cu Chi that agreed to feed B Troop. It became necessary to move a mess hall from Tay Ninh to Cu Chi for C Troop and squadron headquarters personnel.

(b) It is suggested that a sponsoring unit be designated, in the operations order, to coordinate the supply and preparation of rations when it is necessary for a troop to operate away from its base camp facilities.

## (2) Class II

The absence of critical radios, i.e. PRC-41, AN/VRC-24, and the remote control GRU-74, imposed additional and unnecessary command and control problems. This unit is also short the KA-6A cameras.

## (3) Class III

Without problems, generally outstanding support.

## (4) Class IV

Barrier materials are increasingly harder to obtain. Personnel bunkers had to be constructed from make shift materials with questionable safety standards. The situation did not improve until OPORD 4-67 was used to justify this essential construction. Standard engineer plans for different size personnel anti-mortar/rocket bunkers should be made available to units, to include complete bill of materials. If materials on plan are not available for issue, a substitute issue should be made.

## (5) Class V

(a) Total ammunition consumption by elements of this squadron (B Troop, C Troop and D Troop) during Operation Saratoga:

TYPE AMMUNITION	ROUNDS EXPENDED
7.62mm Linked	174,300
2.75mm Rockets	1708
40mm Linked	745
5.56mm	2750
Smoke Grenades (All Colors)	293



(b) Average daily ammunition consumption for one Air Cavalry Troop during our participation in this operation:

TYPE AMMUNITION	ROUNDS EXPENDED
7.62mm Linked	4155.5
2.75mm Rockets	42.8
40mm Linked	13.5
40mm M-79	8.3
5.56	74.4
Smoke (All Colors)	11.1

b. During this operation the squadron operated the Tay Ninh area rearming point without any outside help. This rearming point is actually the responsibility of DISCOM 25th Infantry Division. By utilizing all squadron assets (1 Ammo Specialists and 3 Ammo Handlers, as well as the Support Platoon Leader) no flexibility remained to the squadron to shift rearming points as required by tactical situation. In addition, work details of 2 to 6 men had to be provided by the combat elements of this organization.

c. Maintenance:

During the portion of the operation requiring 24 hour operation of armed UH1C helicopters, the availability was reduced by 50% or more. Arrowweapons teams, flown at night, were required to be down for maintenance during the day. The result being that the troops could provide one arrowweapons team, with no back up during the day. It was also noted that night maintenance for aircraft was hampered due to light discipline requirements at the troop's location at Cu Chi. Direct support maintenance at Cu Chi was also hampered as they were unable to perform maintenance at night. For the elements located at Tay Ninh, normal night maintenance was performed.

#### 14. SPECIAL EQUIPMENT AND TECHNIQUES

In more than one instance, an aeroscout team led a ground maneuver unit to an enemy position, enabling the commander to make a complete exploitation of the area. The scout team made a detailed reconnaissance of the objective area, informing the commander of known enemy locations and suspected locations. A route to the objective was specified including best avenues of approach as well as fording sites over streams. Advance, flank and rear security were provided the unit during the move. At the objective the scouts relayed information on the enemy's activities to the commander and when the enemy broke and ran, the scout team engaged and killed them. This maneuver - air cavalry team proved very effective and should be considered and used on future operations.

#### 15. COMMANDER'S ANALYSIS

ITEM: Timely Release of Tactical Units.

DISCUSSION: At 0700 hours, 7 March 1968, C Troop became OPCON to the 1st Brigade, 9th Infantry Division, located at Dong Tam. The Troop Command Post had to be moved to that location, make coordination with 1st Brigade, and issue an operation ordered by 0700 hours, 7 March 1968. C Troop was not released from tactical operations by the 25th Division until approximately

39

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1930 hours, 6 March 1968. Utilizing a tactical unit until almost the last moment before reassignment, unless a tactical emergency exists, creates an undue hardship, not only upon that unit but also reduce its effectiveness to the receiving unit.

OBSERVATION: The losing organization should be directed to release OPCON at least 24 hours in advance. The G3 of the 9th Infantry Division stated that this was normal procedure, however, the 25th Division thought the opposite was true. A set procedure should be established. It is impossible for an Air Cavalry Troop to move its entire operation at night and be able to function with the expected degree of effectiveness at first light.

b. ITEM: Aeroweapons Teams in Close Support of Ground Units

DISCUSSION: Many times commanders would call for aeroweapons to scramble in support of a contact. When the team arrived on station, the commander was not ready to utilize it because he was employing artillery or did not know the disposition of his ground elements.

OBSERVATION: When commanders request aeroweapons support they should plan for their use prior to arrival. On many occasions it appears that some commanders cry "Wolf" and give no thought to the tactical plan. This prevents the aeroweapons team from being utilized on a mission where it might truly be needed.

c. ITEM: Employment of OH6A with UH1C

DISCUSSION: Many variations in the employment of OH6A's and UH1C's have been tried in the past.

OBSERVATION: The best general employment is one OH6A with one UH1C. This variation provides the ability to recon with the scout and strike with the weapons ship when a target is spotted. The weapons ship also helps to maintain air to ground communications as well as give instantaneous cover to the scout if he receives enemy fire.

d. ITEM: Employment of Light Fire Team

DISCUSSION: The squadron has frequently been detailed to provide light fire teams to support ground units. The missions of an air cavalry squadron are reconnaissance, surveillance, security and economy of force; not light fire team support. When this type mission is forced upon the squadron, it greatly reduces combat effectiveness and ability to accomplish the primary missions. Therefore, the ground commander may not receive the intelligence and information which he may need to properly employ his command.

OBSERVATION: The ground commander must be informed of the air cavalry's primary missions and made to realize that misutilization of air cavalry assets is denying him intelligence and information which he may need to command his tactical units.

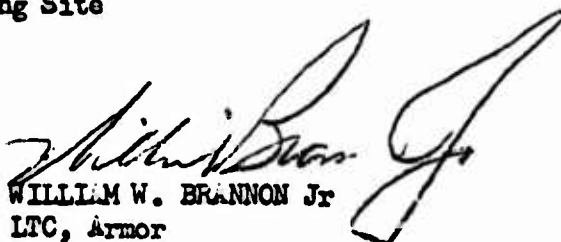
f. ITEM: Engaging Rocket Sites at Night

DISCUSSION: Up to this time the squadron had little and infrequent occasion to engage an enemy weapons position at night. It was decided that additional training was needed in this type of mission. Since the conditions could not be simulated during daylight hours, it was further decided that the training had to be conducted concurrently with the primary mission. An artillery observer was on station with gun teams at night. By calling for a single round of 105mm, the rocket backblast was simulated. The gunship crews were required to detect and immediately engage the target. Since the artillery observer, in an O-1, was able to keep the target area in sight he could also judge the accuracy of the fires.

OBSERVATION: The above procedure proved beneficial to the unit's accomplishment of its mission by increasing the confidence of the gunners to engage such targets at night.

g. No civic action or psychological warfare operations were planned or conducted on this operation.

ANNEXES: A- Operation Overlay  
B- Intelligence Overlay  
C- Sketch of Rocket Launching Site

  
WILLIAM W. BRANNON Jr  
LTC, Armor  
Commanding

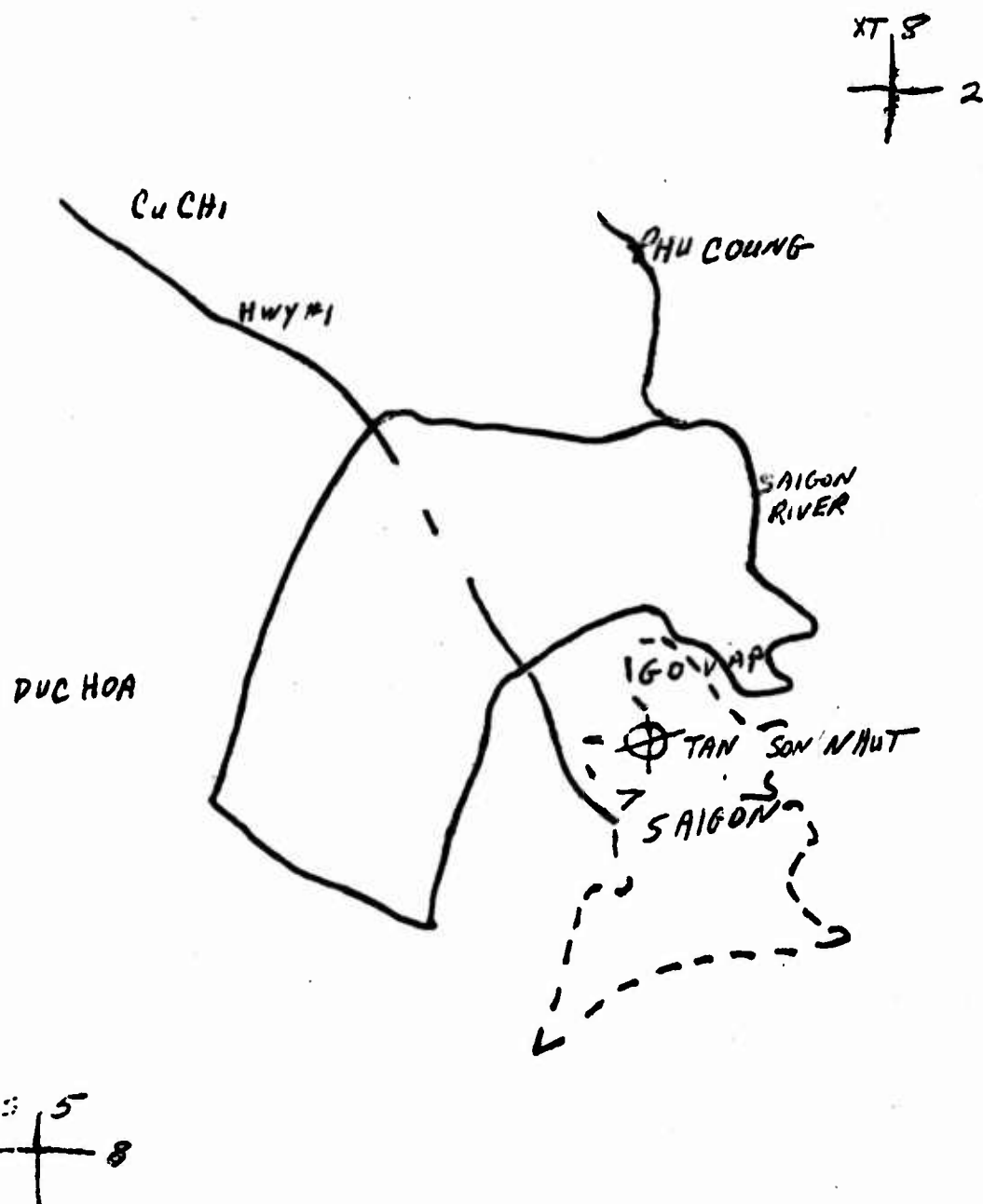
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44

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Annex A (Operation Overlay)

Reference: MAP, VIETNAM, 1:250,000, SERIES: 1501, Sheet NC 48-7



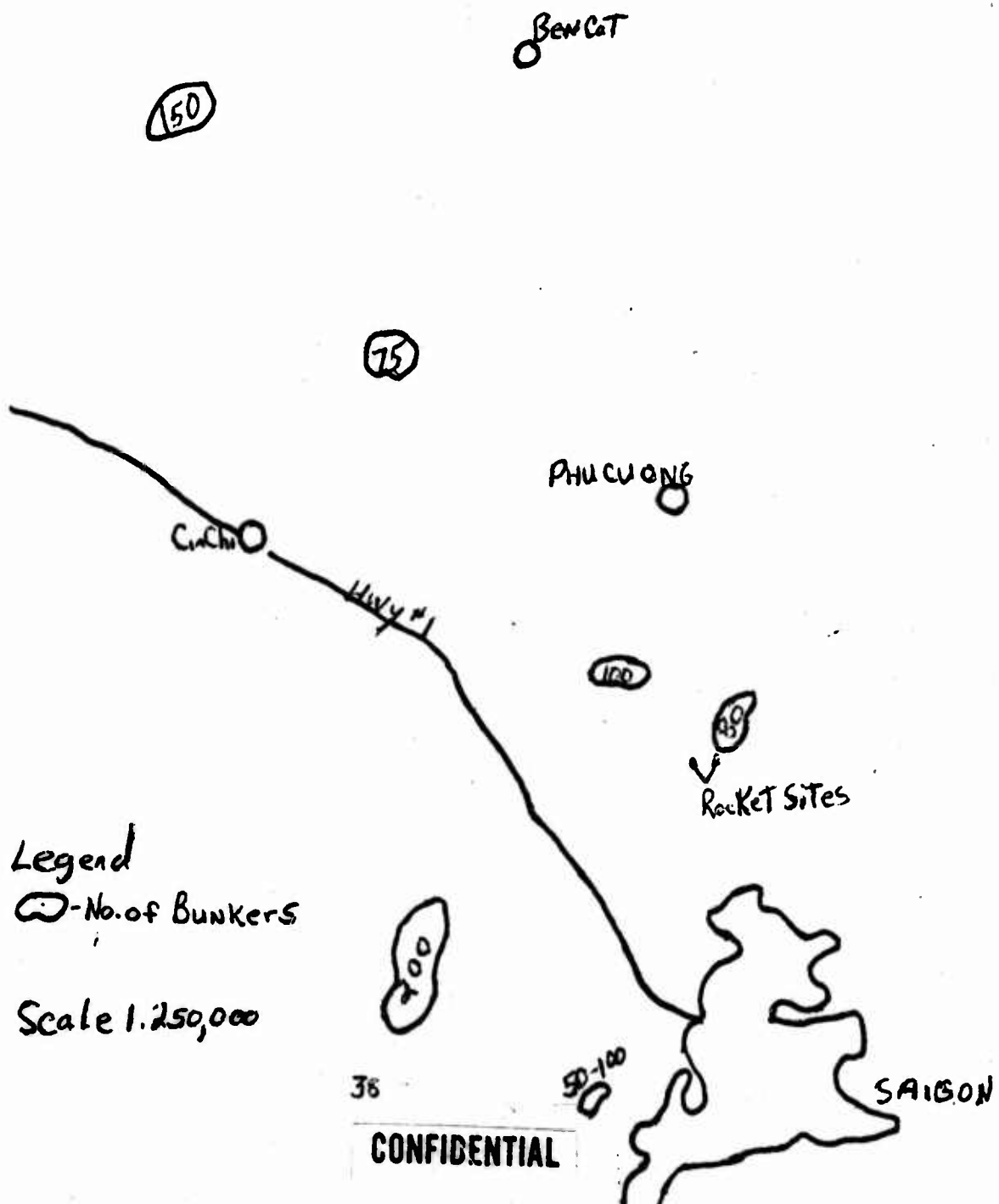
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42

ANNEX B (Intelligence Overlay) To After Action Report OPERATION SARATOGA



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ANNEX C (Sketch of Rkt Launcher Position) T After Action Report OPERATION  
BRAIN TOGA

DIAGRAM OF 122MM RKT LAUNCH POSITION LOCATED APPROXIMATELY 9000 M NORTH-  
OF TON SON NHUT

LEGEND

NOTES: (1) APPROX 200M BETWEEN TWO PSNs

(2) DIKE APPROX 12" WIDE

(3) SINGLE TREES BETWEEN LAUNCH PSN (UNIDENTIFIED)

(4) ROCKETS APPARENTLY FIRED FROM TUBES ELEVATED

BY GOM POST TYPE FIRELINE AS INDICATED ON  
ATTACHED SHEET

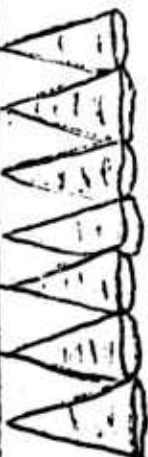
✓ - RICE

X - FIRING PSN

○ - SHALLOW PIT

▽ - BACK BLAST

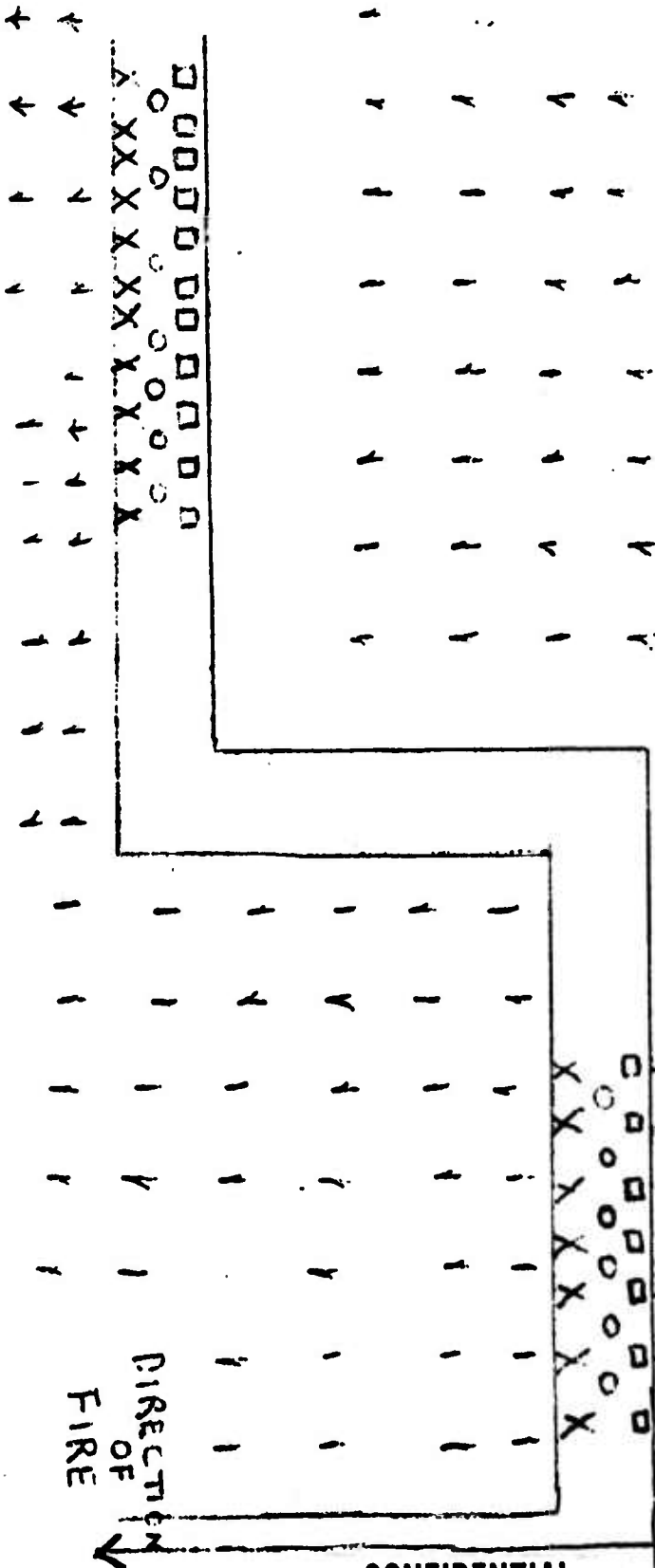
○ - TREES



NORTH

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DIRECTION  
OF  
FIRE



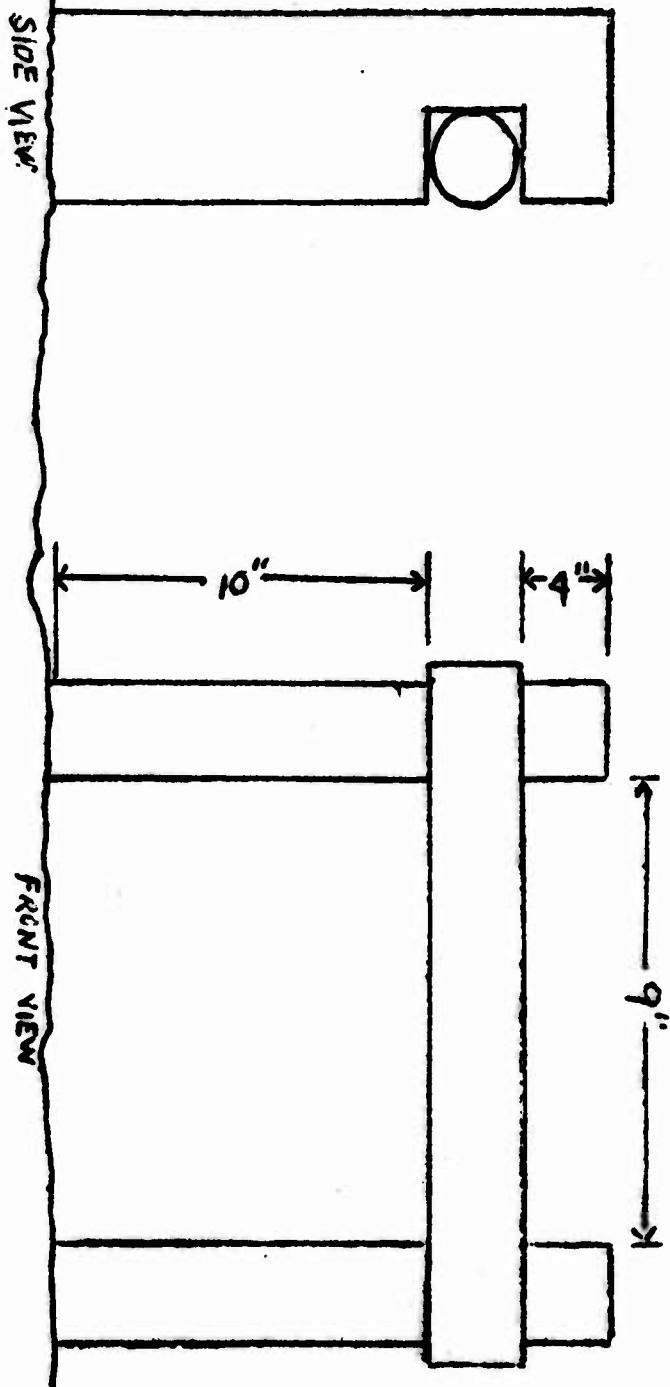
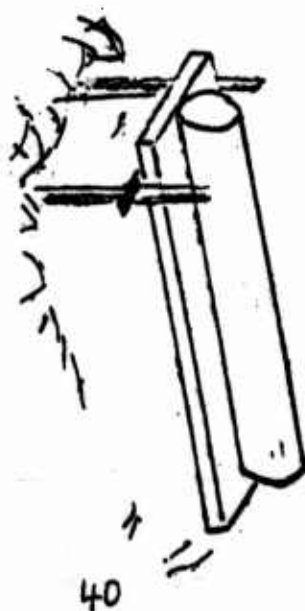
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44

ANNEX C (Sketch of Rocket Launcher Position) to permit correct operation

DIAGRAM OF FRAME FROM WHICH 722 MM ROCKETS ARE LAUNCHED

NOTE: TUBES ARE PROBABLY SECURED TO BOARD WHICH IS PLACED WITH FORWARD END RESTING IN FRAME AND WITH THE REAR END RESTING ON THE GROUND



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GREEN  
LEVEL

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ANNEX C .. Operational Report of 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry for Period  
Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-63 (R1)

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report

1. NAME OF OPERATION: Operation WILDERNESS
2. DATES OF OPERATION: 8 March 1968 thru 7 April 1968
3. LOCATION: Tay Ninh Province
4. COMMAND HEADQUARTERS: 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry
5. REPORTING OFFICER: William W. Brannon Jr., LTC, Commanding
6. TASK ORGANIZATION:
  - A Troop, Major Robert A. Witcher, Commanding  
(OPCON to 199th Light Infantry Brigade)
  - B Troop, Major James T. McManus, Commanding  
8 March 1968 thru 23 March 1968; 24 March 1968 OPCON to 1st Brigade,  
1st Infantry Division.
  - C Troop, Major Gary E. Luck, Commanding  
OPCON to 9th Infantry Division until 23 March 1968; 24 March 1968  
thru 7 April 1968.
  - D Troop, Captain Russell W. Mengel, Commanding
7. SUPPORTING FORCES: None
8. INTELLIGENCE:
  - A. When the 3rd Squadron, 17th Cavalry was committed to operation  
Wilderness there had been no recent contact with the 271st, 272d, 273d VC Regi-  
ments which indicated that elements of these units had possibly moved to  
supply areas and were deliberately avoiding contact with Free World Forces.

41

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46

**B. Terrain and Weather:**

(1) General: The TACR was bounded generally by Cambodia on the North and West in War Zone C, the 1st Infantry Division boundary on the East and the XT25 East West grid line on the South.

(2) Terrain:

(a) Observation and fields of fire ranged from limited in War Zone C to excellent in the rice paddies near Go Dau Ha.

(b) Obstacles - Throughout the TACR there were no natural or artificial obstacles which impeded the reconnaissance or movement of the squadron.

(c) Concealment - The hours of darkness and early morning fog provided the VC and NVA with natural concealment from air activity.

(d) Key Terrain - Highway 22 was selected as key terrain since this is the route by which convoys move to resupply the Tay Ninh area.

(e) Avenues of approach:

(1) Fish Hook - Saigon River - Michelin Plantation.

(2) Highway #1 leading from Cambodia to Go Dau Ha.

(3) Weather:

(a) Visibility - During early morning hours visibility was restricted due to fog and haze.

(b) Temperature - The temperature averaged in the high eighties throughout the operation.

**C. Intelligence During the Operation (Annex B Intelligence Overlay):**

(1) Lines of communication for the VC/NVA extended from the Fish Hook South toward the Michelin Plantation.

(2) Logistical Bases: Several large bunker complexes were discovered. In the vicinity of XT5271 a possible transfer point was located; several truck tracks (3/4 ton) led into the area from the North but no tracks were discovered leading from the area to the South. There were also two 3/4 ton trucks, type and make unknown, spotted under camouflage. In the area a cache consisting of approximately 4000 lbs of rice was discovered as well as 300 boxes of small arms ammunition.

**9. MISSION:**

Conduct armed aerial reconnaissance of 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, TACR to locate VC/NVA forces, enemy logistical bases, and interdict enemy lines of communications. Provide counter-mortar aero weapons team for Dau Tieng Base Camp during the hours of darkness. Conduct route reconnaissance and security between Tay Ninh and Trang Bang.

**10. CONCEPT OF OPERATION:**

3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry (-) will conduct armed aerial reconnaissance in the 1st Brigade TACR with one air cavalry troop. B Troop will locate, report,

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42

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and destroy, within its capabilities, VC/NVA forces, enemy logistical bases, and enemy lines of communications. Provide a counter-mortar team for Dau Tieng each evening. D Troop will conduct a daily route reconnaissance of Highway 1 and 22 from Tay Ninh to XT413238. Local patrols will be conducted along route following the initial reconnaissance mission. Secure engineer work parties as necessary.

II. EXECUTION: 8 March 1968 thru 23 March 1968

On 8 March 1968, 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry (-) was placed OFCON to 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division and given the mission of performing reconnaissance in the 1st Brigade TAOR (Annex A), searching for signs of enemy movement and all enemy intelligence. During this period, lines of communication between Cambodia and the Michelin Plantation and several base areas were plotted. On 11 March, B Troop spotted four NVA soldiers dressed in khaki uniforms at XT613312. The enemy troops were taken under fire resulting in 4 KBA (BC). Later in the day, D Troop reported a roadblock and possible enemy ambush site at XT530183. One company of 4th Battalion, 23d Infantry was sent to that location as a reaction force. Due to the distance and time involved for the reaction force, the enemy had abandoned the ambush site just prior to the company deploying. No contact was made during the maneuver. On 16 March, two aero weapons teams from B Troop were sent to XT234300 when an ARVN outpost came under heavy attack by an estimated VC battalion. B Troop received anti-aircraft fire from one position which they immediately engaged and silenced. The aero weapons teams then engaged the VC positions. With the combined fires from the weapons aircraft and the ARVN soldiers, the VC attack subsided and was soon broken. B Troop was credited with 25 KBA (BC). On 18 March, an aero scout team from B Troop was on a reconnaissance vicinity XT565503 when the team received heavy automatic weapons fire. The team leader immediately called artillery on the position. Following the fire mission the team made a low level assessment of the damage and credited the artillery with one automatic weapons position destroyed and two KBA (BC). Between 18 March to 5 April, D Troop was assigned the additional mission of escorting gravel trucks, from the 65th Engineer Battalion, from Tay Ninh to Trang Bang in support of road repair operations. On 20 March, E Troop discovered an enemy storage area at XT481593 containing bunkers and one large tin building. An artillery mission was called on the site, resulting in one secondary explosion producing a 150 foot high mushroom cloud. On 21 March, the aero rifle platoon of B Troop was inserted at XT1646, on a reconnaissance in force operation of a reported VC rendezvous point. Inspection of this area failed to show any signs of recent activity and the platoon was extracted. D Troop, on a route reconnaissance mission, encountered an ARVN popular forces unit which had just been ambushed along the route at XT385285. D Troop assisted the unit by placing 106mm recoilless rifle fire on targets pointed out by an American advisor to the unit. Contact was then broken with unknown results. The aero rifle platoon of B Troop was inserted on 22 March at XT573502, in coordination with 2d Battalion, 22d Infantry (Mechinized). The platoon established a blocking position at that location as the battalion swept toward the platoon from the west. Negative enemy contact was encountered on the operation and the

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platoon was extracted at 1536 hours. On 23 March, C Troop was released from the 9th Infantry Division and returned to squadron control.

b. 24 March 1968 thru 7 April 1968

On 24 March 1968 B Troop was placed OPCON to 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division and C Troop assumed B Troop's missions in operation WILDERNESS. On 25 March D Troop encountered an ARVN Mechanized Company which had been ambushed at XT299361. D Troop approached the rear of the ARVN unit and deployed to the south, west and east of the village of Can An (XT292361). D Troop supported the ARVN advance by placing 106mm recoilless rifle fire on the enemy locations. Twenty (20) VC were spotted at XT299361, attempting to envelop the ARVN from the south and were immediately engaged. The VC then withdrew in the direction they had come. Approximately one hour and thirty minutes later, the VC broke contact with the ARVN unit. D Troop had negative casualties or damage and inflicted three (3) VC KIA (Possible). The aero rifle platoon of C Troop was inserted at XT528553 in a coordinated operation with 2d Battalion, 22d Infantry (Mechanized). C Troop set up a blocking position with the battalion sweeping toward the platoon. Negative contact was established and the platoon was extracted at 1300 hours vicinity XT519556. On 26 March, an Air Force Forward Air Controller, assigned to the squadron, spotted 40 VC at XT120947, walking along a road. The FAC contacted one of C Troop's aero scout teams and vectored them to the target area. By using forward air controlling procedures, the team was vectored to the enemy location, made the first firing pass, and caught the VC still on the road. The team was credited with ten (10) VC KBA (BC). On 30 March, C Troop was performing an aerial reconnaissance south of Tay Ninh between the Oriental River and the Cambodian border. An estimated VC company was sighted occupying a base camp at XT301301. Three airstrikes were put into the target area, however the strikes were relatively ineffective. On 3 April, C Troop spotted an enemy base camp at XT539721 and marked the target for a FAC. Results of the airstrike were 30-40 bunkers destroyed with two KBA (BC). On 5 April, C Trp discovered recent vehicle tracks leading from Cambodia toward Dau Tieng. Similar tracks had been spotted and reported in the past, however, no trucks were ever found. On this occasion, C Troop followed the vehicle tracks to a storage area, XT527713, and found two 3/4 ton trucks, type unknown, and 300 boxes of ammunition. An air strike on the area destroyed 1 truck and more than half the ammunition and damaged the other truck. Artillery fire was placed on the target area throughout that night. On 7 April, D Troop stopped a Vietnamese vehicle along with several suspicious personnel, at XT352334. The vehicle was filled with contraband including whiskey, cigarettes, C-Rations, and beer. The vehicle and personnel were turned over to the Vietnamese National Police. This period confirmed that VC/NVA forces were rebuilding and reoccupying old base areas in War Zone C and were moving large amounts of supplies from Cambodia, by truck, toward the Lau Tieng area.

12. RESULTS:

a. Friendly

	KHA	WHA
Officers	0	0
Warrant Officers	0	0
Enlisted Men	0	0

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## b. Enemy:

- (1) VC/NVA KIA (BC) - 82
- (2) VC/NVA KIA (Poss) - 109
- (3) Military Structures Destroyed - 107
- (4) Military Structures Damaged - 23
- (5) Sampans Destroyed - 37
- (6) Sampans Damaged - 4
- (7) Miscellaneous Destroyed:
  - 1-3/4 Ton Truck
  - 150-Boxes of Small Arms Ammunition

c. All Bomb Damage Assessments were conducted by aerial reconnaissance.

## 13. ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITY

## a. Supply

- (1) No difficulties were experienced in either Class I, II, III, IV, V.
- (2) Total ammunition expenditures by the squadron during this operations:

2.75 Rockets	1,376
7.62mm Linked	164,550
5.56mm	4,022
40mm (M-79)	393
40mm (M-5)	1,684
Smoke (All Colors)	193
Frag Grenades	10
White Phosphorous Grenades	240
106mm (Recoilless Rifle)	29
81mm (Mortar)	4
MK-24 (Flare)	192

## b. Maintenance:

Daily road reconnaissance missions are very demanding on equipment and vehicles in D Troop. Each vehicle averaged 125 miles per day during this operation. Although numerous parts were replaced, particularly suspension items and tires, equipment readiness averaged 99% throughout the period. A concrete preventive maintenance program, actively supervised before, during, and after operations, forestalled major problems. Aircraft maintenance was greatly improved enabling all air cavalry troops to increase their availability approximately 10% over that available during the last operation.

## 14. COMMANDER'S ANALYSIS

## a. ITEM: Local Intelligence

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DISCUSSION: Daily road operations bring the unit in constant contact with local civilians, Popular Forces, and ARVN troops. These people live and work in their specific areas and know not only the terrain but also enemy locations and movements.

OBSERVATION: It is highly desirable to cultivate these local intelligence sources. By daily contact, these sources can give an exceptionally clear picture of local VC activity, many times pin-pointing numbers and locations. The time involved in seeking out this type intelligence is well spent.

b. ITEM: Operational Control

DISCUSSION: When a cavalry troop becomes OFCON to a battalion size unit, there has been a tendency to fragment the assets of the troop, using the sections to augment the reconnaissance platoon or rifle companies.

OBSERVATION: Commanders must be briefed on the missions, capabilities, and limitations of the cavalry troop. Particular emphasis must be placed on the necessity for maintaining platoon integrity as all sections are dependent upon each other for the cavalry platoon to operate as it is designed.

c. ITEM: Maintenance

DISCUSSION: When performing daily route reconnaissance and security missions, with wheeled vehicles, the maintenance requirement increases drastically. Parts wear faster, more maintenance is required, and minor assemblies, i.e. ball joints, shock absorbers, universal joints, break with increasing frequency.

OBSERVATION: In order to maintain an acceptable degree of combat readiness, both a strong maintenance program and management of assets are necessary. A good preventative maintenance program stressing operator maintenance, timely requisitioning of parts, and timely replacement of parts is a must. Secondly, the available assets must be managed so each piece of equipment gets necessary maintenance time. This may require standing down individual vehicles if a platoon cannot be released for maintenance. With careful management the former can be an effective program.

d. ITEM: Dust

DISCUSSION: Dust continues to be a major problem in many helicopter parking and landing areas throughout the corps. Dust causes many extra hours of maintenance and presents a major safety hazard for helicopters taking off and landing. At night, dust can cause pilots to lose ground reference with serious consequences.

51  
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OBSERVATION: All commanders must realize the hazards of dusty conditions in areas where rotary wing aircraft operate and take such action as necessary to eliminate these conditions.

  
WILLIAM W. BRANNON Jr.  
LTC, Armor  
Commanding

ANNEXES: A - Operations Overlay  
B - Intelligence Overlay

DISTRIBUTION:  
Special

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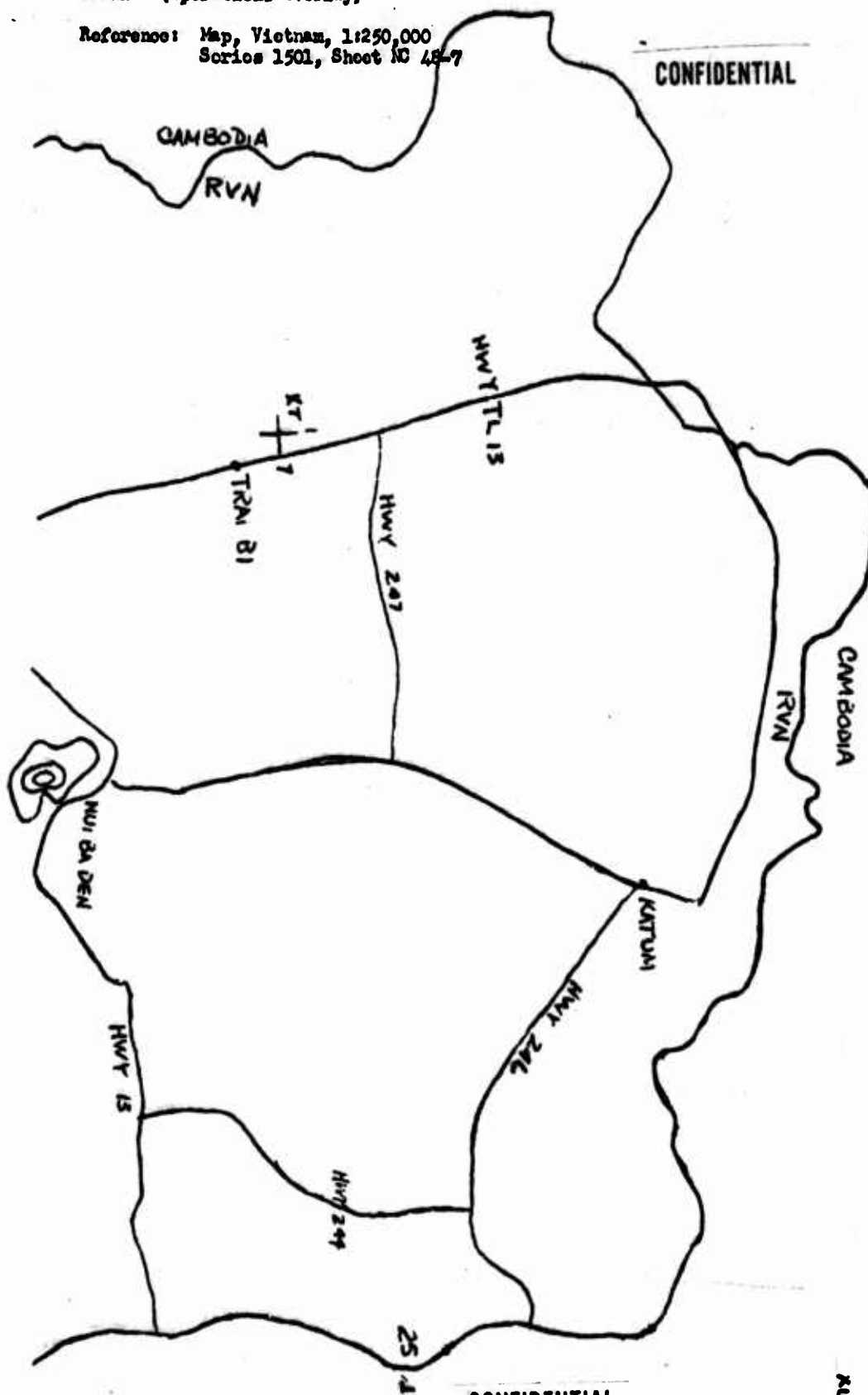
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ANNEX A (Operations Overlay)

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Reference: Map, Vietnam, 1:250,000  
Series 1501, Sheet NC 48-7

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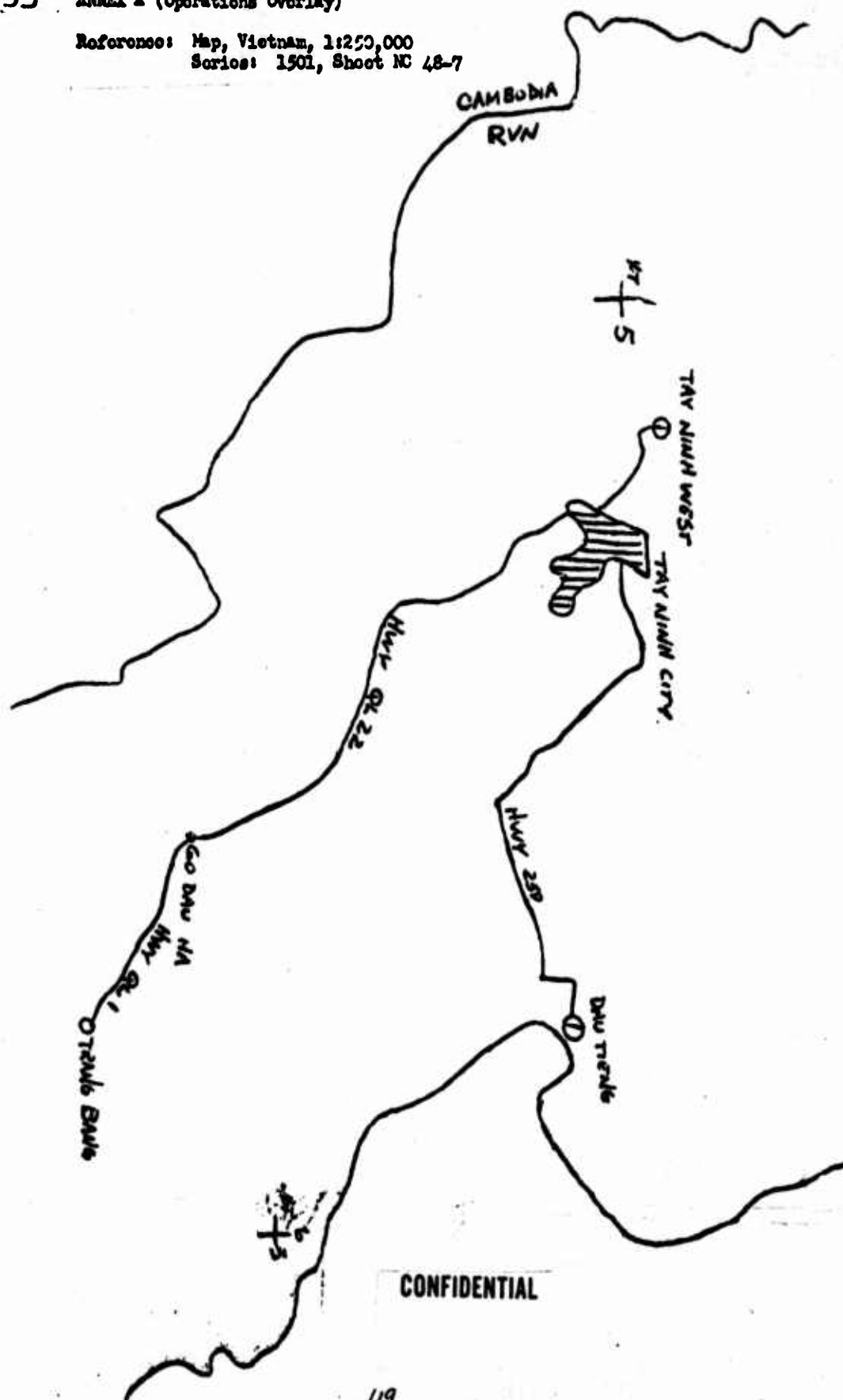


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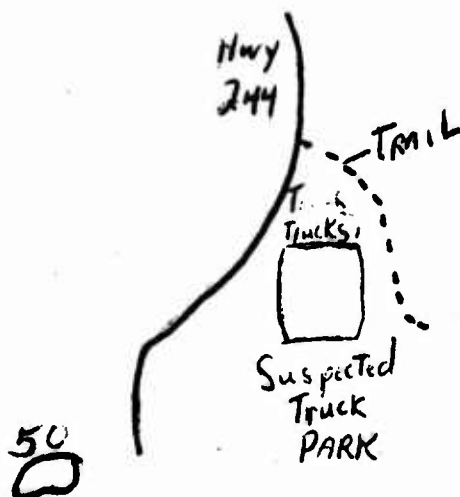
## ANNEX A (Operations Overlay)

Reference: Map, Vietnam, 1:250,000  
Series: 1501, Sheet NC 48-7





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ANNEX D Operational Report of 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry for Period  
Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

SUBJECT: Operation Truong Cong Dinh from 7 March 1968 thru 23 March 1968

1. Name of Operation: Truong Cong Dinh
2. Dates of Operation: 7 March 1968 thru 23 March 1968
3. Location: Delta region to the east, north and west of My Tho in the Dinh Tuong Province.
4. Command Headquarters: C Troop, 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry.
5. Reporting Officer: Gary E. Luck, Major, Armor, Commanding
6. Task Organization: C Troop, 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry
7. Supporting Forces: None
8. Intelligence:

a. Prior to operation. Enemy forces were operating in the area harassing military installations with mortar, rocket and recoilless fire in addition to interdicting traffic along highways between My Tho, Cai Le, and Tan An.

b. Terrain and Weather.

(1) General: The area was bounded by the Mekong River on the south, Cai Le to the west, Tan An to the north, and Binh Phuoc to the east.

(2) Terrain: The area is flat consisting of many rice paddies and treelines that are interlaced with numerous canals and rivers. All the canals and rivers are lined with heavy foliage. Almost all of the rice paddies are dried up due to the dry season.

(3) Weather: The weather during first light hours was characterized by poor visibility and low ceilings 50% of the time. During the day visibility was unlimited with winds generally at 15 to 20 knots out of the southeast.

c. Intelligence During the Operation. The assigned area of operation contained enemy base camps from which the enemy staged attacks against the My Tho River. Also, extensive camps large enough to quarter entire battalions were in evidence in the Ap Bac area. Several cache points were found throughout the operational area.

9. Mission: Conduct armed aerial reconnaissance to find and fix the enemy.

10. Concept of Operation. Troop C will conduct aerial reconnaissance in assigned area of operation with weapons and scouts. Aero rifles will be employed for ground reconnaissance as the situation dictates.

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## ANNEX D (Continued)

## 11. Execution:

a. Movement. C Troop (-) moved from Tay Ninh to Dong Tam by air. The forward CF was co-located with the 9th Infantry Division Command Post at Dong Tam. The organic helicopters flew to the operational area each day from Tay Ninh and used Dong Tam as a forward operational base. One aero scout and one aero weapons ship remained overnight at Dong Tam to perform first light missions.

b. 7 March 1968 thru 23 March 1968. 7 March 1968 Troop C kicked off its first light aerial reconnaissance support in full swing to locate enemy forces for the 1st Brigade, 9th Infantry Division, which was to react with its two battalions as ready reaction force. Troop C reconned the assigned area of operations and found nothing but unoccupied bunkers throughout the area. The brigade decided to commit the two battalions into the area anyway. The area of operations was approximately 10 kilometers northeast of My Tho. The aero rifle platoon was also inserted to recon an area that could not be seen from the air. Nothing significant was turned up. They were inserted again on 9 March, again with negative contact. On 11 March the aero rifle platoon was scrambled to search a suspected enemy communications site. An aero scout ship working with the aero rifles spotted the site and guided the aero rifles to the site. The aero rifles captured various items of radio equipment along with 6 detainees and 1 Chi Com rifle. C Troop was also credited with 1 KBA during the operation. On 12 March C Troop was credited with 5 KBA's. On 13 March C Troop was given a day for maintenance stand-down. On 15 March C Troop was credited with 1 KBA during a visual reconnaissance mission. Also, the aero rifle platoon was inserted again with negative contact. On 17 March, Troop C kept in contact most of the day. The aero rifle platoon was inserted. The aero rifles were credited with 2 KBA's, and also 1 detainee. The aero scouts spotted several occupied bunkers ahead of the aero rifle platoon. E Company, 3d Battalion, 47th Infantry was inserted to support the aero rifle platoon. They both advanced against the enemy position. They came under heavy fire and were pinned down. It was late in the day and the decision was made to disengage and be extracted. C Troop was credited with 6 KBA's during the operation but an aero rifleman ended up MIA. After the extraction was complete, air strikes and artillery combined to decimate the area. On the following day C Troop aero rifles went back into the same area with negative contact and were unable to locate the MIA. On 21 March, C Troop was credited with 7 more KBA's. On the afternoon of 23 March, C Troop was released by the 9th Infantry Division to revert to squadron control.

## 12. Results:

a. Friendly	KBA	WBA	MIA
Officers	0	1	0
Warrant Officers	0	0	0
Enlisted Men	0	0	1

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## ANNEX D (Continued)

## b. Enemy:

- |     |                       |    |
|-----|-----------------------|----|
| (1) | VC/NVA (EC) -         | 20 |
| (2) | VC/NVA (Posa) -       | 17 |
| (3) | Prisoners -           | 7  |
| (4) | Military Structures - | 11 |
| (5) | Sampans destroyed -   | 7  |
| (6) | Individual weapons -  | 1  |
| (7) | Miscellaneous -       |    |

Various radio equipment - one Chi Com receiver and one Chi Com transmitter with associated accessories.

## 13. Administrative Activities:

a. No major problems in supply were encountered during the operation. Class I, III, and V support at Dong Tan was outstanding.

b. Maintenance remained at Tay Ninh and although the area of operation was a one hour flight from Tay Ninh, it did not prove to be a major problem. Maintenance support has been outstanding but a shortage of parts still holds the availability rate down.

14. Problem Areas. Dust still continues to present a major problem in C Troop's revetment area. This causes extra hours of maintenance for the crew chiefs and presents a morale problem. The dust also reduces the lifetime of certain aircraft parts. The dust also presents an extremely hazardous condition when operating at night.

## 15. Commander's Observations:

a. ITEM: Credibility (Reliability) of Scout's Observations

DISCUSSION: Commanders ask us to find the enemy so they can react to the enemy. Our scouts recon an area in detail and find nothing. The commander decides to commit his forces anyway. He also finds nothing.

OBSERVATION: Sizeable forces have been committed into areas, where the air cavalry has already checked, which has resulted in a waste of time. Recommend commanders be informed of the capabilities of air cavalry and be patient instead of going ahead with planned operations that seldom turn up anything.

b. ITEM: Changeover from one unit to another unit.

DISCUSSION: C Troop was not released from the 25th Infantry Division until the last light mission on 6 March 1968. C Troop was under operational control of the 1st Brigade, 9th Infantry Division at 0700 hours, 7 March 1968.

OBSERVATION: The operations (command post) had to be flown to Dong Tan late at night and be set up ready to control operations at 0700 hours. If the weather would have been bad this would have been impossible. Recommend a longer lead time be instituted when changing between major commands.

53 CONFIDENTIAL

ANNEX D (Continued)

c. ITEM: Planning

DISCUSSION: Information from higher headquarters told us that we would move the troop in tact, by air and ground means to Dong Tan. A liaison team, when talking to the 9th Infantry Division staff, found that an area had not been set up for the troop, rations had not been planned for, aircraft maintenance support had not been planned and no revetments were available for overnight parking.

OBSERVATION: Units are pleased to receive air cavalry support but either do not realize or are unwilling to provide the necessary logistical support.

d. ITEM: Utilization

DISCUSSION: Many times a light fire team would be scrambled to support units in contact or scrambled to a ground unit to perform a visual reconnaissance mission.

OBSERVATION: When a light fire team is committed to support a unit it limits the capability of the rest of the troop to continue its mission of intelligence gathering. The supported unit should state the mission and let the troop commander decide how to employ his elements in order to accomplish the mission.

e. ITEM: Employment of the Rifle Platoon

DISCUSSION: The rifle platoon was used considerably during the operation to perform ground reconnaissance of limited objectives.

OBSERVATION: The delta region proved to be a good area for frequent employment of the aero rifle platoon because of large and numerous landing zones. The aero rifle platoon was inserted 7 times of which 2 times they made contact.

f. ITEM: Ready Reaction Force

DISCUSSION: There seems to be a general reluctance to react to aero rifle platoon contacts. C Troop aero rifles were in contact but were re-inforced with only a company. Both the platoon and the RRF company became pinned down and were told to break contact.

OBSERVATION: If a division size unit is not going to react to aero rifle platoon contacts, the entire concept is raped and the unit worth is dwindled. Recommend that better planning be done at headquarters so that they are prepared to react or delete the use of the aero rifles.

GARY E. LUCK  
Major, Armor  
Commanding

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ANNEX E - Operational Report of 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry for Period  
Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report (Operation Valley Forge-  
Harrisburg from 8 March 1968 to 17 March 1968)

### SECTION I

#### A. NARRATIVE:

On 8 March 1968, Troop A, 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry, began supporting the 198th Light Infantry Brigade on operations Valley Forge and Harrisburg. During this period, Troop A flew 816 sorties and 387 hours in support of the operations. The scout platoon flew 137 hours, weapons platoon flew 199 hours and lift section flew 51 hours. Lift ships airlifted 197 passengers and 2000 lbs of cargo during this period.

Troop A, 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry, accounted for the following confirmed enemy losses:

- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1. Enemy Killed:      | 3 |
| 2. Sampans Destroyed: | 1 |

Friendly losses of this unit due to hostile action during the reporting period was one OH-6A damaged.

During Operations Valley Forge and Harrisburg the following ammunition was expended:

Type	Rounds
1. 7.62mm	62,000
2. 5.56mm	115
3. 2.75 Rockets	794
4. M-5 (40mm)	1,570
5. M-79 (40mm)	20
6. Smoke	9

- B. 1. Training Days (No formal training-constant OJT)  
2. Number of movement days - 0  
3. Number days operational - 10

C. No major difficulties were encountered during this reporting period concerning logistics.

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ROBERT A. WITCHER  
Major, Armor  
Commanding

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ANNEX F - Operational Report of 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry for Period  
Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report (Operation Box Springs-  
Harrisburg from 18 March 1968 to 21 March 1968)

A. NARRATIVE:

On 18 March 1968, Troop A, 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry, began supporting the 199th Light Infantry Brigade on operations Box Springs and Harrisburg. The first ten days of operation Harrisburg were included in Annex E.

During this period, Troop A flew 363 sorties and 179 hours in support of the operations. The scout platoon flew 104 hours, weapons platoon flew 53 hours and lift section flew 22 hours. Lift ships airlifted 49 passengers and 950 lbs of cargo during this period of operations Box Springs and Harrisburg.

Troop A, 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry, accounted for the following enemy losses:

1. Enemy Killed:	2 Confirmed, 15 Possible
2. Sampons Destroyed:	4
3. Structures Destroyed:	2

Friendly losses of this unit due to hostile action during this period was one OH-6A damaged.

During operation Box Springs and Harrisburg the following ammunition was expended:

Type	Rounds
1. .7.62mm	17,900
2. 5.56mm	150
3. 2.75 Rockets	210
4. M-5 (40mm)	100
5. WP	3

- B. 1. Training Days (No formal training-constant OJT)  
2. Number of movement days - 0  
3. Number of days operational - 4

C. No major difficulties were encountered during this reporting period concerning logistics.

ROBERT A WITCHER  
Major, Armor  
Commanding

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ANNEX G - Operational Report of 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry for Period  
Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

SUBJECT: Combat Operation After Action Report

1. NAME OF OPERATION: Complete Victory
2. DATES OF OPERATION: 241000 hrs Mar 68 - 151200 hrs Apr 68
3. LOCATION: Phouc Long and Binh Long Provinces
4. REPORTING UNIT: B Troop, 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry
5. UNIT SUPPORTED: 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division
6. INTELLIGENCE: When B Troop was committed to support the 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, it was believed that the VC/NVA supply channels were moving large quantities of supplies on a new road built by the VC/NVA, that was from approximately the YU2525 Grid to approximately the YU 2800 Grid on a North - South axis. It is believed the road is capable of supporting heavy truck traffic and supposedly the enemy has moved tanks down the road. Most of the acts of terrorism are conducted by local guerilla type units and aimed at Montagnard families. The enemy also has the capability to harrass friendly units with mortar attacks.
7. MISSION: Conduct armed aerial reconnaissance in the assigned area of operation, locate enemy supply routes, determine enemy lines of communications, locate enemy base camps, plot the VC/NVA built road running north-south, and provide protection for the Montagnard families.
8. CONCEPT OF OPERATION: B Troop will become OPCON to the 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division and operate out of a forward command post at Quan Loi. The armed aerial reconnaissance missions will originate out of Quan Loi to disrupt enemy lines of supply and communications. Main emphasis being placed on protecting the Montagnard families and plotting the north-south route of supply.
9. EXECUTION:
  - a. 24 March 1968 - 9 April 1968

B Troop participated in operations around the Song Be area in support of the 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division for a period of twenty-three days. During the initial phases of the operation the activity was characterized by armed aerial reconnaissance, in the assigned area of operation, "Danger - Stogie". On 25 March 1968, YU248187, automatic weapons fire was received from an enemy position. The fire was returned by the weapons ship with unknown results. A base camp, YU284097, consisting of one hundred bunkers was taken under fire with artillery. Fifteen bunkers were damaged by the artillery fire. On 26 March 1968, two enemy base camps were located at YU199139 and YU178253. The hunter-killer team received moderate automatic weapons fire at the YU186988 grid. One hit in the main rotor blade

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62

ANNEX G (Continued)

was the extent of the damage to the gunship. The enemy fire was engaged with organic weapons with unknown results. On 27 March 1968, YU248196, a VC base camp was located consisting of five hootches, eight bunkers, two tunnel entrances and five VC with weapons. The area was engaged with organic weapons resulting in one KBA confirmed, one hootch destroyed, three hootches damaged, and eight bunkers damaged. On 28 March 1968, YU254922, another enemy base camp was located that consisted of fifteen hootches and fifteen bunkers. An artillery fire mission was placed into the base camp destroying four hootches. A hunter-killer team received heavy automatic weapons fire from XU250088. The scout ship took two hits and the gunship received one hit. An artillery fire mission was called into the area with unknown results. On 29 March 1968, YU296038, four VC were found in a base camp that also contained seventy-five bunkers. The VC were engaged with four KBA possible. While the aero rifle platoon was on downed aircraft stand-by at Song Be, the airfield started receiving incoming 82mm mortar rounds. The pilots managed to take off in two UH1H's before the two ships were damaged. The aero rifle platoon remained on the ground during the attack without having anyone injured. The attack consisted of one hundred and fifteen rounds. The mortar positions were engaged by a light fire team and the mortar fire was silenced. On 30 March 1968, XU926005 and SU 932008, two bridges were reported that were capable of carrying trucks and oxcart traffic. Artillery was placed in both areas which damaged both bridges. On 1 April 1968, XU978088, seven hootches and eight bunkers were engaged with artillery. Two hootches were destroyed and five were damaged. On 3 April 1968, an enemy base camp at XU903114 was located and consisted of four hootches and five bunkers. Two of the hootches were destroyed with organic weapons. At XU965055 eight hootches were engaged and destroyed. The third enemy base camp of the day was located at XU974142. It consisted of four large hootches and seven VC with automatic weapons were spotted in the base camp. The VC were engaged with organic weapons resulting in four KBA confirmed. Artillery was then placed into the camp and four hootches were destroyed, three damaged, and three more hootches uncovered. On 4 April 1968, XU918011, two bunkers and twenty-seven bags of rice were discovered. One bunker was damaged after engaging with organic weapons. One VC was engaged while attempting to hide at XU965118 resulting in one KBA possible. An enemy base camp, XU968142, of five hootches and one 1.5 KW generator was engaged with artillery fire. Two hootches were destroyed, three hootches were damaged and the generator was destroyed. Artillery was used again at XU968154 resulting in six KBA confirmed. On 5 April 1968, another VC attempting to hide at YT106973 was engaged with one KBA confirmed. On 6 April 1968, the hunter-killer team reported three VC base camps. The first at XU911125 consisted of nine hootches and one hundred meters of trench line. The second base camp, YT058943, had two hootches and three bunkers. A VC was found hiding in the base camp and artillery was called in the area resulting in two bunkers destroyed and one KBA confirmed. Artillery was placed into XU920041 with unknown results after fire was received. The aircraft received negative hits from the area. Seven VC on bicycles wearing back packs with three RPG rounds and one mortar tube were engaged resulting in four KBA confirmed and three KBA possible.

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## ANNEX G (Continued)

On 7 April 1968, XT992984, eleven VC were engaged resulting in one KBA possible. At YU 181129 six VC were observed carrying weapons. The clearance to fire was denied by the Province Chief. On 8 April 1968, XT997951, the hunter-killer team observed one VC and engaged resulting in one KBA possible. Artillery was placed in XU122118 after a new base camp was discovered. The base camp had numerous log bunkers and the results of the artillery were unknown. On 9 April 1968, XU971111, five hootches and ten bunkers were located. Artillery was placed into the area with unknown results. A base camp of fifteen bunkers and ten hootches was located at XU866217. Two hootches were damaged by artillery. An air strike was placed in XU916125 after one hundred, fifty pound bags of rice were discovered. Three hootches were engaged by the gunship at YU113173 and one hootch was destroyed with the other two damaged. Artillery was given credit for one KBA confirmed after one bunker and one VC were located at YU123131. Another hootch was damaged when engaged at XU916124. The hootch had a tin roof with plastic sides.

## b. 10 April 1968 - 15 April 1968

During the second phase of the operation with the 1st Infantry Division, the aero scouts worked closely with the forward air controller in bringing many air strikes upon enemy base camps. Two VC at YU203167 were engaged on 10 April 1968 resulting in two possible KBA. Sixteen VC took evasive action at XU944086 and were engaged. Eleven of the VC were KBA confirmed with five possible KBA. Three road blocks made of steel bars were located at YU982048, YU980049 and YU985049. On 11 April 1968, XU998156 twenty hootches and fifteen bunkers were engaged with artillery resulting in unknown results. Six hootches were destroyed when engaged at YT238960. At XU519337 a gunship received heavy automatic weapons fire resulting in five hits in the aircraft and minor damage. On 13 April 1968, XU986118, an air strike was placed against fifteen hootches and eleven bunkers. Another air strike at XU987118, destroyed nine hootches and damaged seven others. Six VC were engaged at XU930080 resulting in two KBA confirmed and four KBA possible. On 12 April 1968, XU996156, an air strike was directed against an enemy base camp. The camp consisted of twenty hootches, ten bunkers and ten VC. Fifteen hootches were destroyed, five hootches damaged, eight bunkers destroyed, three KBA confirmed and five KBA possibles. An air strike against two hootches at XU995155 resulted in one hootch destroyed and one damaged. Two fuel storage bladders made of rubber were destroyed at XU995155 by an air strike. Four hundred VC/NVA were engaged with organic weapons at XU610204 to XU599216. Heavy automatic weapon fire was received from the area but the aircraft received negative hits. Twenty KBA confirmed and twenty KBA possibles were the results of the engagement. On 14 April 1968, XU903146, an air strike was placed into the area containing fifteen bunkers and five hootches and three VC hiding in one of the bunkers. The air strike destroyed three bunkers and claimed 3 possibles. Three more bunkers were destroyed by an air strike at XU910127. An area containing three hootches and eleven bunkers was engaged at XU908126 by an air strike. Two hootches were destroyed, one hootch damaged, eight bunkers destroyed and three bunkers damaged.

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**ANNEX G (Continued)**

**10. RESULTS:**

	<u>KHA</u>	<u>WHA</u>
a. Friendly		
Officers	0	0
Warrant Officers	0	0
Enlisted Men	0	0

**b. Enemy**

(1) VC/NVA Body Count -	57
(2) VC/NVA Possible -	54
(3) Military Structures Destroyed -	58
(4) Military Structures Damaged -	19
(5) Sampans Destroyed -	3
(6) Sampans Damaged -	1
(7) Bridges Damaged -	2
(8) Rafts Destroyed -	3
(9) Rafts Damaged -	3

**11. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS: CLASS V**

TYPE AMMUNITION

ROUNDS EXPENDED

7.62 Linked	139,350
5.56mm	970
2.75 Rockets	1,717
40mm Linked	2,260
Smoke Grenades (All Colors)	166

12. SPECIAL EQUIPMENT AND TECHNIQUES: The area of this operation was void of friendly units and therefore a reaction force to our spot reports was not available. Hence, if we were to accomplish any harrassment or destruction to the enemy it was necessary to use organic fire power, artillery fire or tactical air strikes. The area of operation proved to be abundant in enemy base camps and therefore to be successful we were restricted mostly to artillery and air strikes. During a period of five days from 10 April 1968 to 14 April 1968 we used a total of twenty-six air strikes against enemy base camps. During this five day period seventy-four enemy hootches were destroyed and twenty-three were damaged by air strikes. The techniques of using the aero scout in conjunction with the forward air controller in directing the air strikes proved to be very beneficial to both. We were able to do more damage to the enemy and the air force was receiving a much more complete bomb damaged assessment on their air strikes. The system proved highly successful.

**13. LESSONS LEARNED:**

a. Caution must be exercised to avoid flying in the dead mans zone. After flying over terrain that has an elevation of 20 feet above sea level it is easy to fly at 1500 feet indicated and actually be at 900 feet since the terrain elevation is 600 feet above sea level.

**CONFIDENTIAL****ANNEX G (Continued)**

b. The hilly terrain made it extremely difficult for the gunship to cover the scout ship. Pilots had to be aware of the changing ground elevation at all times.

c. The ceiling conditions must be 2000 feet absolute for the gunship to adequately cover the scout ship. The ships can fly when the ceiling is much lower; however to perform the mission of the hunter-killer team the ceiling is of utmost importance in order that cover can be provided for the scout ship while the scout ship is flying low level.

d. Even though we were assigned free strike zones it became all important that the pilots use discretion before firing upon a target. The majority of the assigned AO was inhabited by Montagnard families.

e. Due to the lack of lighted urban areas at night the pilots had to rely more on instrument flying abilities. It is necessary to know the frequencies of all available navigational aids.

f. When working in an area of extremely tall trees and heavy bamboo, a jungle penetrator should be available at all times in case the extraction of a crew is required in an area where landing zones are non-existent.

JAMES T. McMANUS  
Major, Armor  
Commanding

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ANNEX E - Operational Report of 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry for Period  
Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report (Operation Box Springs  
22 March 1968 - 28 March 1968)

A. NARRATIVE:

On 22 March 1968, Troop A, 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry continued to support the 199th Light Infantry Brigade on operation Box Springs. Operation Harrisburg was concluded on 21 March 1968. The first four days of operation Box Springs were included Annex F. Operation Box Springs terminated on 28 March 1968.

During this period, Troop A flew 856 sorties and 394 hours in support of the operations. The scout platoon flew 193 hours, weapons platoon flew 142 hours, and lift section flew 59 hours. Lift ships airlifted 297 passengers and 12,000 lbs of cargo during this period of operation Box Springs.

Troop A, 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry, accounted for the following enemy losses:

1. 55-cal barrels destroyed: 7
2. Barrels of rice destroyed: 2
3. 150 lbs of rice destroyed.
4. sampans destroyed: 8
5. Structures destroyed: 3

No friendly losses due to hostile action during this period.

During this period the following ammunition was expended:

Type Ammunition	Rounds Expended
1. 7.62 mm	78,500
2. 2.75 Rockets	740
3. M-5 (40mm)	843
4. Hand Grenade	10
5. White Phosphorus	15
6. M-79 (40mm)	200
7. Smoke	4

- B. 1. Training days (No formal training-constant OJT)  
2. Number of movement days - 0  
3. Number of days operational - 7

C. No major difficulties were encountered during this reporting period concerning logistics.

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ROBERT A. WITCHER  
Major, Armor  
Commanding

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ANNEX I - Operational Report of 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry for Period  
Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report (Operation Wilderness  
30 March 1968 - 11 April 1968)

## A. NARRATIVE:

On 30 March 1968, Troop A, 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry continued to support the 199th Light Infantry Brigade as it prepared for operation Wilderness which began 310700 March 1968 and terminated 11 April 1968. This report covers operation Wilderness and the interim days between operation Box Springs and operation Wilderness.

During this period, Troop A flew 1433 sorties and 616 hours in support of the operation. The scout platoon flew 215 hours, weapons platoon flew 187 hours, and lift section flew 214 hours. Lift ships airlifted 894 passengers and 16,000 lbs of cargo during this period of operation Wilderness.

Troop A, 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry accounted for the following enemy losses:

1. Enemy Killed: 2 confirmed, 5 estimated.
2. 2,200 lbs of rice captured.
3. 1,300 lbs of rice destroyed.
4. sampans destroyed: 7
5. Boats destroyed: 7
6. Bridges destroyed: 1

Friendly losses of this unit due to hostile action during the reporting period were:

1. One OH-6A damaged.
2. Two WIA

During this period the following ammunition was expended:

Type Ammunition	Rounds Expended
1. 7.62 mm	50,250
2. 5.56mm	1,660
3. 2.75 Rockets	703
4. M-5 (40mm)	857
5. Hand Grenade	42
6. White Phosphorus	46
7. M-79 (40mm)	12
8. Smoke	25

- B. 1. Training days (No formal training-constant OJT)  
2. Number of movement days - 0  
3. Number of days operational - 13

C. No major difficulties were encountered during this reporting period.

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ROBERT A. WITCHER  
Major, Armor 63  
Commanding

ANNEX J - Operational Report of 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry for Period  
Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

SUBJECT: Combat Operations after Action Report

1. NAME OF OPERATION: Complete Victory
2. DATES OF OPERATION: 151200 hrs April 1968 - 211800 hrs April 1968
3. LOCATION: Bien Hoa, Binh Dong, and Phouc Long Provinces
4. REPORTING UNIT: B Troop, 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry
5. UNIT SUPPORTED: 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment
6. INTELLIGENCE: When B Troop was committed to support the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, the VC/NVA were moving heavy supplies from Cambodia on a road the VC/NVA had built. The road is capable of accomodating heavy truck traffic. The majority of the units operating in the area consists of administrative and logistic personnel moving the supplies. The enemy also has the capability to harrass friendly units with mortar and probing ground attacks.
7. MISSION: Conduct armed aerial reconnaissance in the assigned area of operation, locate enemy base camps, determine how far south the VC/NVA road extends, conduct route reconnaissance, and locate best avenues of approach for advancing friendly units.
8. CONCEPT OF OPERATION: B Troop will be OPCON to the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment and operate out of a forward command post established at Quan Loi. The 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division provides rations and ammunition.
9. EXECUTION: B Troop participated in support of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment for a period of seven days. During the entire operation the activity was characterized by special and individual type missions. These included several route reconnaissance missions, river reconnaissance missions in search of fording sites, and landing zone reconnaissance missions. On 16 April 1968 a reconnaissance mission was conducted to locate available fording sites that would accommodate heavy truck vehicles. Three fording sites were located at the following coordinates: YU292045, YU001055 and YU319043. One VC wearing a khaki colored uniform was engaged with organic weapons at YT301986 resulting in one KBA confirmed. At YT312990 moderate automatic weapons fire was received with three hits to the aircraft and one WHA. A base camp was located in the same area and two air strikes were placed against the base camp resulting in one hootch destroyed and one hootch damaged. On 17 April 1968 heavy fire was received from YU249294 with negative damage or hits to the aircraft. An air strike was placed in the area with unknown results. Small arms fire from YU315194 was returned with organic weapons with unknown results. Negative hits were sustained by the aircraft. On 19 April 1968 a one and one-half ton truck, painted gray with the letters "CD-3" on the side was located at YT346930. After obtaining permission to engage the vehicle, it was destroyed with rockets.

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64



**ANNEX J (Continued)**

On 19 April 1968 at YT190584 a VC on a bicycle tried to evade. The VC was engaged resulting in one KBA confirmed. Another bicycle was destroyed at YT186583. A route reconnaissance was conducted on 20 Apr 68 from YT0875 to YT2154. The reconnaissance provided vital information for the 11th ACR prior to their moving into the area. On 21 April 1968 the assigned mission was the location of all available landing zones around the YT2221 grid that could be used to establish a fire support base for further operations. Several LZ's were located.

**10. RESULTS:**

a. Friendly	KHA	WHA
Officers	0	0
Warrant Officers	0	0
Enlisted Men	0	1

**b. Enemy**

- (1) VC/NVA Body Count - 1
- (2) VC/NVA Possible - 1
- (3) Military Structures Destroyed - 1
- (4) Military Structures Damaged - 1
- (5) Bicycles Destroyed - 1
- (6) Rafts Damaged - 1

**11. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS: CLASS V**

<u>TYPE AMMUNITION</u>	<u>ROUNDS EXPENDED</u>
7.62 Linked	24,550
5.56 mm	120
2.75 Rockets	48
40mm Linked	140
Smoke Grenades (All Colors)	34

**12. SPECIAL EQUIPMENT AND TECHNIQUES:** Radio communication between forward command post and aircraft often became a problem while working with the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment. This problem was aggravated because of the extremely large assigned area of operation that the 11th ACR had to operate in. On two occasions this necessitated the use of an airborne relay aircraft. This practice should not be used unless it becomes completely necessary.

**13. LESSONS LEARNED:**

- a. When working with a unit that continually reconns by small arms and .50 cal fire, the scout teams must know the friendly units locations at all times so that they don't receive friendly fires.
- b. When working with a highly mobile unit, constant air to ground communications must be maintained in order to keep track of the friendly ground units.

JAMES T. McManus 65  
Major, Armor  
Commanding



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70

ANNEX K - Operational Report of 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry for Period  
Ending 30 April 1968

SUBJECT: Current Squadron Organization and Locations

<u>1. Assigned Units</u>	<u>UIC</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry	WAAMAA	Tay Ninh RVN
Headquarters Troop	WAAMTO	Tay Ninh RVN
A Troop (Air)	WAAMAO	Long Binh RVN
B Troop (Air)	WAAMBO	Tay Ninh RVN
C Troop (Air)	WAAMCO	Tay Ninh RVN
D Troop (Ground)	WAAMDO	Tay Ninh RVN
 <u>2. Attached Units:</u>		
39th Transportation Company (Main Detachment)	WG2XAA	Tay Ninh RVN
520th Aviation Battalion (Main Detachment)		Tay Ninh RVN

66

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Annex L (Operational Report of 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry Period Ending  
30 April 1968.

SUBJECT: Aircraft Status as of 30 April 1968

Subordinate Unit	UH1C		UH1H		OH6A	
	Auth	O/H	Auth	O/H	Auth	O/H
HQ Troop	5	5	2	2	0	0
A Troop	11	11	6	6	10	10
B Troop	11	11	6	6	10	10
C Troop	11	11	6	6	10	10

## Annex M (Operational Report of 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry for Period Ending 30 April 1968)

## 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry Operational Statistics

Subordinate Unit	Sorties Flown	Troops Lifted	Cargo Lifted (Tons)	Enemy KIA	Structures Dmg Dest	Supplies Dmg Dest	%/C Confirmed Loss	%/Dann ed
HQ Troop	2493	3144	55	0	0	0	1	3
A Troop	8729	3308	19	71	3	18	0	31
B Troop	5133	2419	17	524	37	112	24	58
C Troop	5815	3770	49	288	7	44	18	113
D Troop	0	0	0	5	0	13	0	0
3/17th ACS	22,170	12,641	140	896	47	187	42	202
							8	88

## \* Loss and Damage by Type:

HQ Troop; Aircraft Loss: 1 UH1H  
 A Troop; Aircraft Loss: 4 OH6A, Aircraft Damage: 9 OH6A, 18 UH1C, 2 UH1H  
 B Troop; Aircraft Loss: 1 OH6A, 2 UH1C; Aircraft Damage: 16 OH6A, 14 UH1C  
 C Troop; Aircraft Damage: 16 OH6A, 12 UH1C, 1 UH1H

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Annex N (Operational Report of 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry for Period  
Ending 30 April 1968)

SUBJECT: Logistics to OLL

<u>WEAPON</u>	<u>DENSITY</u>	<u>DAILY AVERAGE CONSUMPTION</u>
7.62 (All Types)	112	23,778
.38	208	12
.45	307	15
M-79 (40mm)	215	17
M-5 (40mm)	12	122
81mm (Mortar)	3	4.4
106mm (Recoilless)	6	.38
5.56mm	369	602
2.75in Rockets	38	103
Smoke (All Colors)		24
WP Grenade		8
Shot Gun	20	7

Annex O - Monthly Flying Hours (Operational Report of 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry  
1st February to 30 April 1968)

1. Flying hours during the month of February 1968.

OH6A - 1957 hrs

UH1C - 1941 hrs

UH1H - 976 hrs

2. Flying hours during the month of March 1968.

OH6A - 1437 hrs

UH1C - 2010 hrs

UH1H - 956 hrs

3. Flying hours during the month of April 1968.

OH6A - 1477 hrs

UH1C - 1716 hrs

UH1H - 806 hrs

4. Average aircraft availability during the reporting period.

OH6A - 53%

UH1C - 67%

UH1H - 67%

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